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THE

NEW ÆRA;

OR,

Adventures of Julien Delmour:

RELATED BY HIMSELF.

77779

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY MADAME DE GENLIS.

Il ne faut point mettre un ridicule où il n'y en point; c'est se gâter le goût, c'est corrompre son jugement et celui des autres. Mais le ridicule qui est quelque part, il faut l'y voir, l'en tirer avec grâce et d'une manière qui plaise et qui instruise. *Caractères de la Bruyère.*

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HENRY COLBURN,

PUBLIC LIBRARY, CONDUIT STREET, HANOVER SQUARE.

1819.

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Printed by Schulze and Dean, 13, Poland Street.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

AMIDST that galaxy of female genius and talent which has illumined this country and its formidable rival, France, during the last and present century, few are more conspicuous, and no one has devoted herself so exclusively to the interests of religion, morality and education, as Madame de Genlis, who now terminates her most successful literary career, by a production, which, to the charms of fiction, unites all the solid advantages of historical record.* While these qualities cannot fail to be justly appreciated by the English reader, no wonder, that the rarity of such a combination in a French Novel, added to the Author's well-earned celebrity, should have procured extraordinary success for the original.

From the multiplied vicissitudes of the Author's life, in which she has experienced the most flattering smiles as well as bitterest frowns

* There is still another work of the Author's forthcoming though it was written prior to the PARVENUS.

of the blind goddess, enjoying the security of former days, and participating in the perilous uncertainty of later times; forming the distinguished ornament of a court, and not unfrequently mixing with the inmates of a cottage; finally from being an eye witness of the greatest revolution that ever shook the foundations of political society; Madame de Genlis was above all others, amongst her literary contemporaries, least likely to be an idle spectator of passing events; so that, while sedulously occupied in the composition of her various other works, all tending to the same great end, the perfection of morals, she collected extensive materials for history: these were so voluminous that the plan of a much more detailed work was projected some years ago, but appalled at the time it would necessarily have taken to put her original design into execution, she, at length, determined to curtail the book to its present limits, by suppressing a great number of curious particulars, and excluding altogether a long episode.

Without any pretensions to the inimitable humour and exhaustless ingenuity of Le Sage, Madame de Genlis wished, like him, to exhibit personages of every condition, while she exposed all that appeared ridiculous or worthy of censure in the manners and customs of her time.

If many of the incidents related in the following pages bear some resemblance to the renowned adventures of Gil Blas de Santillane, particularly in point of moral effect, it has doubtless arisen more from the author's fear of departing too far from *real life*, than from any disregard to the interests of morality; the whole tenor of her writings forbids us to suppose the author of Adele and Theodore capable of making that object subservient to any other; while she seems to have thought many of our modern writers in this line, do infinite mischief by representing society under such fascinating colours, that the young and inexperienced are more apt to be lulled into a security which often proves fatal to happiness, than awakened to a just sense of those dangers that inevitably await their first entrance on the stage of life.

Madame de Genlis knew, that virtues and vices are so interwoven in our nature as to render it scarcely possible for the most perfect, to be exempted from occasional aberrations, rather therefore than draw portraits of moral perfectibility, which have never really existed, she has generally preferred showing the paramount blessings of virtue contrasted with the miseries attendant on vice, in the same character, to presenting those ideal models frequently placed before

young persons, who are thus taught to form a false estimate of human nature, while it makes them more susceptible of those impressions which the contagion of example seldom fails to produce.

The foregoing motives may account, in a great degree, for the seemingly opposite qualities to be found in some of the *Dramatis Personæ*, brought forward in the *New Æra*, and if there should be any traits of character calculated to shock the English reader, there are a much greater number that deserve his imitation. While contemplating by far the best picture of French manners hitherto delineated by a native, we may justly felicitate ourselves on a superiority of moral attainment, which, though deteriorated by the progress of luxury, and prevailing rage, blameable as it is injudicious, in favour of foreign customs, foreign dress, and foreign habits, is still, thank heaven, the envy and admiration of those nations, which do not betray any disposition to follow our example.

In the brief but dreadful sketches Madame de Genlis has drawn of the revolutionary horrors, it is consoling to reflect that although, (to use the expression of an ancient writer,) the laws slept, virtue still kept her virgils; and

though according to an assurance of her own, the author might have easily multiplied her instances of heroism, she rather confined her narration to the ludicrous, than more serious side of the question.

Whatever difference of opinion there may be, as to the author's political principles, or on the general nature of her work, it would be extremely ungenerous to withold that meed of praise so justly merited by the very liberal manner in which she has not only drawn the character of Mr. Smith, intended to represent a well known and highly respectable class of society in this country, but the equally flattering testimonies in favour of our charitable institutions, from which it may be truly said, we derive more real greatness and honour, than any other source whatever. This gratifying tribute of an enlightened mind and celebrated writer, acquires additional claims to our acknowledgements, when compared with the marked illiberality of many other French authors, not to mention the hatred so incessantly manifested against those numerous bands of English emigrants who now crowd the towns and villages of that country. Unable as the editor has been to do justice to the original, in its present form, he could not suffer the above remarkable instances of can-

dour and impartiality to pass unnoticed in the few preliminary observations with which he has been induced to trouble the reader.

Without entering into any further details on the subject of our author's claims to public attention, it may be finally observed that the principal object of this production, is to present people of every rank and condition, with important historical facts, striking pictures, and harmless fictions, calculated to make them feel the utility of virtue, and inspire a fondness for useful occupations! Such also has been the aim Madame de Genlis has invariably proposed to herself during a literary career of more than forty years; and such are those which it is presumed, every female writer of this or any future age, would do well studiously to imitate!

THE NEW ÆRA

OR

ADVENTURES

OF

JULIEN DELMOUR,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

CHAPTER I.

Birth and Education of Julien.

It may be justly said that the extraordinary character of public events, during the last thirty years, has conferred more or less importance on the contemporaries of those, who have been principally instrumental in producing such wonderful changes, the history of which, will resem-

ble a long melo-drame, without plan, unity of action, time, or place, and full of improbabilities. This political drama has, in fact, represented scenes of the most fantastic as well as revolting description. Traits of heroism, atrocities, burlesque, and tragic scenes have passed successively in review. Nor have imposing spectacles, terrible examples, pompous and often ludicrous ceremonies been wanting to embellish the grand plot. If to these be added, crimes, murders, and proscriptions, august victims sacrificed, thrones overturned, conflagrations, battles and *fêtes;* tyrants, knaves, villains, fools and heroes, some emphatic actors, many talentless declaimers, reciting in a style of bad taste, and giving currency to ideas as false as they were commonplace, nothing more is required to establish the comparison.

Every Frenchman who had attained the age of maturity, and was present at the opening of this tremendous drama,

or happened to be in France when it commenced, was forced to take a part, so that whoever knew how to write with tolerable correctness, might, if party spirit did not render him blind, vindictive or calumnious, flatter himself with the hope of producing some interesting memoirs on the occasion. Now, in addition to my being extremely curious, as to all that passes around me, many have given me the credit of observing events with accuracy and minuteness. Born in the plebeian class, I never blushed for my origin, nor have I ever entertained that hatred against Nobles and Courtiers, which is so often prompted by injustice, while it inwardly betrays a spirit of envy and detraction. Having seen vices, virtues, and follies in every rank, I have naturally reflected on the incidents, manners and peculiarities of this epoch, faithfully describing whatever I saw most remarkable, and taking special care not to be influenced either by partiality or

exaggeration in the recital. This merit is highly essential to the historian, and all might possess it. Yet, nothing is more conspicuous than a want of it throughout the numberless memoirs and other works already published on the revolution. In treating on this subject, there are opinions, persons and parties, which it is at all hazards attempted to confound and destroy. There are some whose suffrage is sought for, because they are feared, while they are personally despised. For my own part, I am only ambitious to merit esteem from the friends of truth; their approbation is, I well know, unattended with *éclat*, but neither cabal nor intrigue are required in its attainment, and it is moreover substantial. It is this approbation which can alone insure the stability of works professing to describe historical facts, or paint manners; and it is that which hands them down to posterity. To obtain this desirable end, if not by talents,

at least by the unbeaten track of candour and sincerity, I am about to commence the history of my singular adventures; and following the examples of some modern writers, shall go back to the first years of childhood.*

I am the son of a confectioner who resided in the Rue des Lombards, where I was born in the year 1767. My father's shop was next to the sign of the Faithful Shepherd, and held the first rank in this street, so famous for its sugar plumbs, and brilliant to the eyes of children, during the eve and first day of every year.

No infancy was ever more happily

* The Ex-Senator, Garat, has pronounced an eulogium on the late Mr. Bonnard, this paper is printed, and commences with the following sentence: *Mr. Bonnard had three nurses!* here then is a *début*, that announces important destinies at once, without going into futurity. For it is by no means usual for people to have *three nurses*, and as I had only one, I have thought it best to pass lightly over this period of life, to arrive at that of weaning.

passed than mine; the idol of my parents, it will be readily supposed that I never wanted for play things or sweet meats. From the early age of six, I manifested a decided preference for the trade of a confectioner; and as daily profits were found to accrue from this employment, I gave myself up to it with ardour, and even at that age knew how to crisp almonds and make cracknels, from which my father foretold that his son would become uncommonly industrious, while my mother flattered herself that I should, in the end, cause the reputation of our shop to surpass that of the Faithful Shepherd. This idea delighted her extremely, as the fame of that much frequented house had long been a source of inexpressible grief to her.

Flaxen hair which curled naturally, and a fine complexion gave me such a character for beauty, that one of my uncles, a butcher in Rue St. Martin, my mother's brother, proposed me to

another of the trade, as a capital subject to be mounted on the fat ox of Shrove Tuesday. I was then seven years old, but so small for my age, that I scarcely appeared more than five. Pursuant to my uncle's proposal, they dressed me up in a fine tinselled suit, a crown of roses decked my head; and, having placed me on one of the finest oxen in France, which had been previously ornamented with a profusion of garlands and flowers, for the occasion, I proudly traversed the principal streets of Paris, followed by a long procession to the sound of numerous instruments, and cheered by the acclamations of an immense multitude; nor do I think any victor ever appeard in public with more heartfelt joy or real satisfaction than I did, during this favourite national ceremony. In passing through the Rue de Grenelle, I recognized the Marchioness d'Inglar's children, who often came to our shop; they were now accompanied by their mother, and look-

ing out of a lower window to see the procession pass. The Marchioness was so charmed with my appearance, that she sent a message to my father, next day, desiring he would send me to her house, as she wished to have a nearer view of me. The Marchioness d'Inglar was attached to the court, and one of our best customers; my father having requested the poet, who made the charades, rebusses, and other devices which enveloped our sweet meats, to compose a neat compliment in verse: I not only got it by heart, but was very successful in its recital. On appearing before her she repeatedly embraced me, and then turning to her female companion, said, "We have got a Cupid at last." She next addressed my father, who had brought me, and informed him, that, wishing to give the Marquis, her husband, a *fête* on the first of May following, she had selected me for the purpose of personating the part of Cupid. This proposition was joyfully ac-

cepted, and it was agreed that the Marchioness should take me into the country with her at the end of April.

The Marchioness d'Inglar, then about thirty years of age, was one of the most dissipated women at court, while no one could be more deeply engaged in the little interests of society; she possessed that kind of vivacity which resembles wit; for all women appear to be endowed with this quality, when they unite agreeable manners to an air of careless frivolity and taste for dissipation. Nothing is more common in the fashionable world than mistaking inconsiderate remarks, for brilliant sallies, and violence for imagination. Life seemed to have only one great misfortune for the Marchioness, this was *ennui*; and as she had no resources within herself, she sought for them in play, a constant attendance at the theatres and other amusements, equally calculated to distract her attention; destitute of all exterior fascination, she was also a stran-

ger to coquetry; her pretentions founded partly on a strong constitution and large fortune, consisted in forming parties of pleasure, and doing the honours of one of the most splendid establishments of Paris. With a frigid heart and limited ideas, the Marchioness loved no one; yet, towards the close of April, every year, she became excessively fond of her husband, so as to have a pretext, for giving a superb *fête*, and inviting all the world on the first of May. Her husband was about forty, possessing a character full of sweetness, good nature and solidity, and whose inclinations were as serious as those of his wife were frivolous. Like many great men of that day, such as the Marquis de l'Hôpital, Count de Caylus, &c. he cultivated the sciences with success, and was both a good mathematician and antiquary; although, while in society, he only thought of amusement and relaxation, he seldom entered into the spirit of lively or trifling conversation; but if the Mar-

quis rarely participated in the gaiety of others, he was never known to check it. From being in the yearly habit of publicly receiving declarations of love, from his wife, each of which seemed more passionate than the preceding one, he thought himself adored by her, and consequently returned her assiduities with the most sincere affection. Father of two lovely children, nothing appeared wanting to complete his happiness. The eldest of these, Eusebius d'Inglar, whom the visitors and domestics used to call the Viscount, was twelve years of age; and such were his personal attractions, that they plainly indicated those talents and other excellent qualities, which have since rendered him a truly accomplished man.

His sister, Mademoiselle Edelie, at the age of eight, was extremely beautiful, she possessed the temper and vivacity of her mother with much more grace and sensibility. Such is the interior picture of

the family into which I was admitted, during my infancy. Mademoiselle de Versec, companion to the Marchioness, came to my father's on the 24th of April for the purpose of conducting me to Etioles, the country residence of the family, near Paris. On our arrival, all that bustle and tumult which usually precedes a *fête*, prevailed at Etioles; numerous parties of workmen were assembled in the court and about the gardens, some carrying decorations, others bearing large artificial garlands made of coloured paper; a third party was occupied in putting up lamps, suspending transparencies, &c. As a comedy was to be performed, the actors, all of whom were either relations or friends of the family, employed themselves in long rehearsals, both morning and evening; the drawing room was deserted, and all society interrupted, while the object of this general agitation gave himself up to a kind of mysterious solitude, and rigorous confine-

ment; for he was literally shut out from three-fourths of the house and gardens at least. No sooner did he attempt to advance into the forbidden precincts than he found centinels planted, to prevent intrusion, which obliged him to return and seek refuge in his study. Amongst the various agreeable surprises, in preparation for the Marquis, he was fully aware that on the first of May, a prologue would be recited in his praise; that a comic opera was then to be performed; and that, on leaving the theatre, he was to be shown into the illuminated gardens, where a display of fire-works awaited him; that, after this, supper was to be served in the orangery, all the interior of which was to be carpeted with verdure and flowers; that during the dessert, couplets were to be sung in which he was proclaimed the best of fathers, and most affectionate of husbands; and that this grand day would be at length terminated by a rustic dance in the orangery, and a little

hazard in the drawing-room. The Marquis knew all this, and yet he waited with impatience for the great event, if not to enjoy the pleasure of being surprised, to get rid of the annoyance caused by the numerous preparatives, and regain possession of his house and gardens. I was also obliged to practice my part of Cupid, which was to be spoken in a dialogue with Hymen, personated by young Eusebius d'Inglar. It commenced in a dispute, after which, Wisdom, under the costume of Minerva, surrounded by the Graces, came to reconcile us, so that the scene closed by our embracing each other very cordially, whilst the goddess and her attendant nymphs entwined us together with garlands of roses. These anacreontic ideas were not original, though what we represented, was new to most of the spectators, amongst whom very few had in fact seen this union of Hymen and Cupid, or Wisdom and the Graces; we were universally applauded, and when the repre-

sentation was over, the company did not fail to overpower us with caresses and tartlets. The day which followed this brillant *fête*, as generally happens on such occasions, was languid and melancholy, every one felt fatigued, and all wanted repose. The garden was strewed with faded flowers, and rocket sticks; the servants, worn out by their exertions, were totally unequal to the task of restoring order and cleanliness; nearly all the children were more or less indisposed from indigestion, and scolded by the preceptors and governesses for their intemperance; nothing but lamentations were heard amongst them. Of this number our actors where the most afflicted, particularly the cherubims, performed by the little cousins of Eusebius; these cried bitterly, on account of being condemned to forty-eight hours of rigorous abstinence. The eyes of the ladies were bloodshot, and, the Marchioness excepted, they all complained of megrim, ill-hu-

mour prevailed throughout, and while the Marchioness and poet, who had composed the prologue and couplets, felicitated themselves on their success, the visitors were busily occupied in criticising the sumptuous *fête* which they had so warmly applauded on the preceding evening, nor was there many who did not secretly ridicule the *conjugal love* of her who gave it. The *fête* had cost above twelve thousand francs, and it must be confessed that such a sum, differently employed, would have procured a much more agreeable day than the one which succeeded the scene of festivity: a remark I had frequent occasion to make afterwards, having witnessed its renewal, and even performed a part in each for many subsequent years.

It was settled that I should remain in the country some days after the *fête*; but Eusebius took so great a liking to me, that he obtained a considerable prolongation of leave, from my father, during

which I did not lose my time; for the young Viscount undertook to give me lessons in latin, history and geography, these he repeated constantly during his hours of recreation. Previous to those of play, he gave me a short lesson both morning and evening, recommending at the same time, that I should also study when alone. The Abbé Desforges, his preceptor, was so pleased with my application, that he had the kindness to second the views of his pupil, by which I was, in less than six months, enabled to make a progress that might be considered as really surprising for one of my age. The Marchioness was in the habit of making long and frequent visits to Paris and Versailles, while the Marquis only went to those places occasionally; but the Abbé, together with his pupil and myself, always remained at Etioles. As to Mademoiselle Edelie, she never came home except on particular occasions, such as feast days and anniversaries;

these terminated, she returned to the Abbey of Panthemont, where she had been brought up.

Towards the end of October, we all quitted the country; when the sight of my parents, our shop and its sugar plumbs, afforded me the utmost joy after my country excursion. My Father was astonished at his son's learning, and I soon passed for a prodigy amongst all the confectioners of the Rue de Lombards. The Abbé had given me a few elementary school books, and a map of the world, exhorting me not to forget what I had learned. This I faithfully promised, and proud of my growing reputation, I kept my word. The good Abbé, who also favoured me with his esteem, came every fifteen days and gave me a long lesson, and I passed nearly two hours of each Sunday morning with Eusebius, who made me read to him and repeat whatever I had previously got by heart during a considerable part of that time,

and he seemed to take great interest and pride in my progress. The lessons of my young master were paid for, with preserved marsh mallows, the only sweetmeat which the Abbé allowed me to offer him. If sufficiently attentive, Eusebius would, on his side, reward me with toys and various other little presents.

Notwithstanding the great importance my father attached to the Marquis d'Inglar's protection, it was not without a good deal of uneasiness, that he observed my premature taste for latin and history. He foresaw that I should sink my capital and abandon the shop, to become a man of letters; and in those days, tradesmen did not conceive that their sons ought to pursue studies which could be of no use to their condition in life. My father communicated his fears to the Abbé, who replied that young d'Inglar had shown so great a desire to teach me the lessons he had himself learned; that he found it impossible to oppose his

wishes, although the idea appeared as ludicrous as it was benevolent; that he had been suffered to proceed because this sort of employment was found greatly to increase his emulation, but that as his pupil went into Dauphiny for ten months, in the ensuing year, the lessons would then cease of themselves. This explanation tranquilized my father, the more so from my continuing to show as much zeal as ever, in the business for which he intended me.

CHAPTER. II.

Continuation of the Former.

THE two last months of this winter appeared extremely tedious, and I waited with great impatience for the return of spring, which was to be the signal for repeating the Marquis d'Inglar's *fête*. At length the wished for period arrived ; Mademoiselle de Versec having come to take me away, as in the preceding year, my father finally consented to my passing the whole summer at Etioles, because it was decided that the Marquis, who had a small command in Dauphiny, should positively set out for Grenoble in the early part of September.

The *fête* of this year was much the

same as the first, but I found it a thousand times more agreeable, from having two characters to play in it, and being greatly applauded, for I had made quite as rapid progress in vanity as in learning. A cousin german of Eusebius, and about his own age, passed six weeks of this season at Etioles, Joseph de Velmas did not want for natural abilities and possessed a very good heart; but his extreme wildness, and irritability of temper, even at this early age, announced violent passions and future excesses. Unfortunately M. de Lorme his tutor, could not lay claim either to the merits or principles of the Abbé Desforges. Yet, insinuating manners, great gentleness of address, a polished mind, and considerable talent for poetry, rendered him very agreeable in society. He was highly esteemed in the family particularly by the Marchioness, who regarded him as a man of prodigious genius; it was he who directed all the *fêtes*, and composed the prologues

as well as occasional couplets. He had another very good quality, that of being a lover of peace, and tranquillity, which he most zealously employed to maintain union, or re-establish concord, if interrupted between any of those who composed the family. The confident of every one, he made the best possible use of an ascendancy solely originating in the esteem and deference so generally felt towards him. Amongst his other qualifications, M. de Lorme was eminently endowed with the happy art of banishing any coolness that happened to exist between individuals, and reconciling those who might have formerly disagreed or misunderstood each other; which could only be effected by little concessions on both sides, and these he was always sure of obtaining. This pliant and conciliatory disposition is extremely useful in all disputed cases, as well as in the intercourse of domestic life, but becomes pernicious, when it does not stop, where-

ever there is any chance of its injuring the fundamental precepts of morality; it is of little or no use in a teacher, who ought to possess and inculcate inflexibility of principles. With very good intentions, but for want of reflection and a more enlarged view of the subject, M. de Lorme corrupted his pupil. In overlooking *a little* inapplication, by which he rendered the boy perfectly unmageable. To conciliate in all things, he pretended at one and the same time to teach *a little* religion and *a little* philosophy; owing to this system, not only was his mind vitiated, but his judgment and manners greatly injured. Pursuing the same plan, when introduced into the world, the tutor had no objection to his indulging in *a little play*, or forming *a little attachment;* the result of all which was, that the *début* of Joseph de Velmas, in society, was marked by the loss of two or three hundred thousand francs, and all the excesses of libertinism.

The excellent Abbé Desforges, on the other hand, instilled fixed and unvarying principles into the mind of Eusebius; he never compounded with his pupil, as to the extent of his moral obligation, impressing those sublime truths on his heart and mind, which though they do not always preserve the young and inexperienced from the seductions of the world, prevent them at least from being lulled into a fatal security as to the nature of their follies, which are, by the aid of these early imbibed maxims, seen in their proper light, and often thereby ultimately repaired ere it be too late.

I remained at Etioles till the end of September, and had not the disagreeable task of bidding a long adieu to Eusebius, as business retarded his father's departure for Grenoble, so that the marquis continued at Paris during the whole winter; the marchioness, too, determined not to be disappointed in giving her annual *fête*, prevailed on him to defer his intended

journey till the middle of May, by which arrangement I had another opportunity of appearing on the stage. But a melancholy event soon obliged me to quit Etioles for Paris, as will be seen in the following chapter.

CHAP. III.

The first Misfortune of Julien.—Death of his Father.—His Mother marries again.—Persecution which he Suffers.—Change in his Situation.

SEIZED with apoplexy, at the age of fifty, my father died two days after my return to Paris; my grief was excessive, but I suppressed the demonstrations of it, lest they should augment that of my mother, which appeared to be extremely poignant. All our relatives hastened to us, on this sad occasion. Those most looked up to in the family were my two uncles; one of whom has been already mentioned as the butcher in Rue St.-Martin, the other was a jeweller and brother to my father. I felt much greater partiality towards the latter, because his trade was more hono-

rable, and his shop more splendid; while I blushed for the former, who was, on his side, far from being very well pleased with me, owing to my want of attention to his only son Jacquot Ledru, then about thirteen, who was, to say the truth, one of the coarsest youths, and greatest dunces, of his age, I ever saw. The departure of Eusebius, to Dauphiny, served to complete my affliction at this unfortunate period, but he promised to write to me, and I was not disapppointed.

Towards the end of her mourning, which lasted a year, my mother continued occasionally to revive the subject of her grief. And about three months after, when her weeds were thrown aside, we had a long conversation together, in which, after pronouncing a warm panegyric on my mental qualifications, so much beyond my age, she concluded by declaring that for the interest of our business, and my happiness, she was forc-

ed to marry again, and therefore proposed to bestow her hand on Simon Landry, our principal shopman, a fine looking young man, not more than twenty-eight years of age. My mother added, that she made a great sacrifice in forming such a connection, at the age of forty, but that her tenderness for me, had, in this case, induced her to overlook every other consideration, and vanquish the repugnance she would have otherwise experienced on such an occasion, as Simon who was very fond of me, and extremely clever, would act the part of a father. She also added that it was him, alone, who could conduct the concerns of our trade with success.

I was most sensibly affected on seeing my mother thus immolate herself for my sake, and in other respects quite charmed with her choice, for Simon bore an excellent character, and was always very kind to me, particularly after my father's death, since which time, he used frequently to

caress, and supply me with the best sweetmeats in our shop. No sooner had my mother communicated the joyful news than I went to embrace Simon, with tears in my eyes, who received me with open arms.

The wedding was passed over without invitations or rejoicings, for my mother knew that her marriage would be greatly disapproved by the family; although I thought it a very fortunate event: for on the morning of its solemnization she gave me a new suit of cloathes and as many sugar plumbs as I could eat.

I did not long retain the high opinion I had been led to form of the mildness, and good nature of my father-in-law. On the very commencement of the marriage, his manners underwent a total change, and I was shortly after treated with extreme harshness. At the end of seven or eight months, he turned away the lad who attended in our shop, observing that I was now sufficiently intelli-

gent to supply his place. A very pretty girl, of twenty, was then received into the house, as shop-woman; the motive assigned, by my father, for this addition to our establishment, was, that she wrote a good hand, and understood keeping accounts. This new comer did not please my mother, who found her rather too gay, but Lisey did not diminish a particle of her finery on that account. Though Lisey, like the shop girls of the present day, was not decked out in an embroidered gown and coral necklace, yet, she disdained the check apron, and only condescended to wear black or green taffeta; on Sundays, she sported a round cap, ornamented with large bows of ribbon, trimmed with edging, and a mantle bordered with black lace. Her hair, well powdered and pomatumed, was gracefully brought forward on her forehead. The above, together with a pendant curl, which covered her neck; behind, completed the coquettish costume of Lisey. Nor is it to be wondered at, if such a dress

animated all the prudes in the neighbourhood against her; my mother, who was not a bit better dressed, at length broke out into open hostility, this was opposed by various impertinencies on the part of Lisey, whom my mother wished to turn off, forthwith, a proposition that my father-in-law formally resisted. Lisey remained, the neighbours were indignant, and the peace of our domestic circle thus effectually destroyed.

The bad treatment I now experienced, from my father-in-law, induced my mother, seriously, to think of removing me out of his reach. My uncle, Bénigne Delmour, the jeweller, had always loved me tenderly, he never could be prevailed on to marry, was rich, and greatly respected in his business; from all these circumstances, my mother hoped he would readily consent to take charge of me, and in this, she was not disappointed. Having told him of our deplorable situation, my uncle replied in a manner well worthy of

the confidence she had placed in him, by immediately coming for me; I cried bitterly on leaving her: alas! my child, said she, shedding a torrent of tears, you have no longer a paternal roof!..... sorrowful words, which emphatically describe the misfortune a second marriage but too generally brings on the children of a first, particularly amongst tradesmen, where they are considered as little more than servants, without wages, and always exposed to the severity of a father-in-law or step-mother.

My uncle was one of the best of men; industrious, active, full of good sense and probity. He had but two faults; one was that of his being infinitely too easily cajoled by his great customers; the other, his fancying himself endowed with a degree of ingenuity and penetration, of which he was unfortunately quite destitute. This last pretention increased with his years, for it arose much less from vanity, than the idea he had formed of the

wisdom and experience all those who had passed their fiftieth year ought to possess. Both he and my father were born at a time when religion was the basis of all genuine education, and when, (for the word *equality* was yet unknown,) the middling class of society was unanimous in its opinions, and not only respectable, but in fact highly respected; for they had, in the large towns, always been noted for moral rectitude, sober habits, and purity of manners. Having already imbibed excellent principles from my father, the example of my uncle made it a duty incumbent on me to preserve them. He had a long conversation with me, the day after my arrival at his house: "Nephew," said he, "although when I am gone, you will have enough to keep you from work, I can never suffer such an expectation to make an idler of you. It is true I could, even now, retire from business, and live very comfortably on what I have made; but I afford existence to several workmen, and

am occupied myself; whereas, inactivity would render me weary of life, I therefore wish you, also, to be employed. By taking up my own trade, I can teach you the ornamental and other branches of it, myself, and at the same time, added he, smiling, I do not intend that you shall lose your talents in the confectionary line, for that will be preserved by your making our pies and puddings, during the holidays, at the end of every year, as it is absurd to throw away any useful acquirement, which one has been at the pains to learn. Besides, every thing in the shape of industry is praiseworthy, and sure to become useful, at some time or other, particularly in our sphere." My uncle then said that his own fortune was due to a disposition he had, from his earliest years, to take advantage of every opportunity that presented itself of continually learning something new.

He had been apprenticed to a rich

upholsterer, in the rue St. Honoré; this man was very old, a widower, and without any children; his house stood between that of a gilder and clock-maker; my uncle, profiting by their contiguity, used to occupy his leisure ingratuitously repairing various little articles of furniture, and in return, was taught by them how to set, clean and regulate, clocks and watches, together with a tolerable knowledge of gilding; so that a year had scarcely elapsed before he could keep the clocks in order, repair the door locks, and gild the frames which contained the pictures and engravings of his master. This turn for industry proved so agreeable to the old man, that he took a wonderful liking to my uncle, and, on dying, left him a legacy of forty thousand francs. I was much struck by this story, and wished immediately to profit by it, in requesting that a private tutor might be allowed to attend me, as I did not wish to forget what Eusebius and the good

Abbé Desforges had so kindly taught me, during the two years I frequented Etioles, and which I had been obliged to neglect, since their absence and the marriage of my mother. The application fully succeeded, and my uncle instantly procured me an excellent master; this was an ecclesiastic belonging to the parish, who, in addition to lessons in latin and history, also undertook to prepare me for appearing at the communion table. I was sent to my mother's every Sunday, and, while there, I took care to show her, that the sentiments imbibed in my uncle's house, were those of piety and virtue. Besides prayers and various religious tracts, he made me read the Holy Scriptures, in which I found the most sublime exhortations to filial affection, and amongst others frequently repeated that fine saying in Proverbs: *The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young*

eagles shall eat it. It was in those times still a memorable day in families, particularly with persons of our class, when any of the children took the sacrament for the first time. This august and touching ceremony, which introduces youth into the social community, surpasses the Roman custom of investing with the virile robe, as much by its solemnity as it does in moral effect. What a sublime mode of leading a young person into manhood, is that of declaring to him; "If you render yourself worthy of an intimate union with the Divinity, by the knowledge and fervent practice of all those virtues which he prescribes, you will be no longer regarded as a child; a youth can only become a man, by piety, parental affection, humanity, charity, a generous indulgence to the faults of others, forgiveness of injuries, sobriety, habits of industry, and the government of himself!" The catechism enumerates all these. How celestial and divine is its language! And what a profound im-

pression ought it not to make! What an influence should it excercise during the whole course of our lives; when, in offering a heart, full of purity, faith, and love to God, he begins to adopt us for his own, inspiring us with courage, strength, and perseverance!

At my uncle's, the time passed most profitably for me, in imbibing good principles, reading instructive books, and working at my trade. Constantly occupied, and invariably well treated, I did not suffer a moment's uneasiness, and my worthy protector determined that I should possess such resources, as would, in the end, prove not only useful but extremely agreeable. Ten months after my mother's marriage, she presented Simon with a daughter, to which the Marchioness d'Inglar became god-mother, causing her to be called Casilda, this was not borrowed from a romance, but that of a Moorish King's daughter, for my mother could not bear the thought of her infant's

having a name of mere fancy: the above event did not make my father-in-law a better husband, on the contrary he continued to render my poor mother extremely miserable, by his extravagance, brutality and licentiousness. But such, indeed, is the lot of most women who ally themselves to young men after they have passed the age of forty.

CHAP. IV.

Return of the Marquis d'Inglar and Eusebius.—Joy it affords Julien.—Another fête at Etioles.—Julien's Vanity checked.—Portrait of Mademoiselle de Versec.—Introduction of a personage at the house of Bénigne Delmour, who is destined to play an important part in this History.

I DID not visit the Marchioness till new year's day; she received me with great kindness, for the nobility, whom circumstances had not as yet soured, were then extremely affable and infinitely more polite than the contractors. The Marchioness, when dwelling on the merits and acquirements of Eusebius, took care however not to make me feel the inferiority of my own rank in life. On asking when

he might be expected at Etioles, it was not without considerable regret, that I heard his stay, in Dauphiny, would be much longer than had been at first announced. The Marquis had made two short visits to Paris, in one of which he could not avoid gratifying his wife, by giving one small *fête;* but Eusebius and his preceptor remained at Grenoble, nor did they return with the Marquis until the end of three years; when Eusebius, who was about seventeen, manifested the same affectionate friendship he had previously shown towards me; and of which, throughout the course of our future intimacy he gave me so many generous proofs. I hastened to afford him as well as the Abbé, an opportunity of deciding on the progress I had made in Latin, History and Geography; adding, amongst other acquirements, that I was now a tolerable draughtsman, particularly in ornamental design, and had, besides, made considerable progress as a

jeweller. I then concluded, by presenting him a small seal of my own making ; he encouraged me by praise and caresses, whilst the Abbé addressed the following remarkable words to me : " Persevere, my dear Julien; in whatever situation you are, be active and laborious ; it has been too truly said, that idleness is the parent of every vice, for if crimes are not the immediate result, it is sure to generate them. This observation was not lost on me, and I have often repeated it since, to young people who boasted that although unoccupied, they had not as yet committed excesses, of any kind : the only real pledges of solidity in virtue, are in fact, alone to be found in the practice of religion, and a close application to useful employment.

It is scarcely necessary to say that, after so long an absence, the return of the Marquis and his Son, was joyfully celebrated, and that the Marchioness did not let so good an opportunity slip without giving a superb *fête*. A few days after

my arrival at Etioles, young de Velmas, whose usual appellation was Count Joseph, came there with his tutor M. Delorme, although I had not seen him for some years, we were very well acquainted with each other, during my first visits to the Inglar family, and when he made his appearance in the drawing room, where I was always admitted in my capacity of actor, and the favourite of Eusebius, I ran up to embrace him with all the warmth of an old companion. But such an advance was ill-timed towards the son of a Duke, nor had I ever made it to Eusebius, notwithstanding our friendship, as he naturally excited those feelings of respectful esteem which the truly generous and nobly-born never fail to inspire. Count Joseph, having now reached his eighteenth year, conceived that I was much too old to take such a liberty; he, therefore, avoided my intended embrace, and moving a few paces to the right, I fell into the arms of Mademoiselle Versec, who, in spite of her

usual goodness, received me very coldly in the present instance, because I happened to ruffle her head-dress, the puffing and adjustment of which, on gala days, generally occupied an hour and a half, at least. The whole company burst out into a hearty laugh, at my expence; but this did not displease me half so much as the count's smile, which wounded me to the quick. I have since had frequent occasion to observe this, which at the moment alluded to, expressed derision, irony and resentment, and of which, the coxcombs of the court had, at that period, assumed the exclusive use; a privilege which they now divide with the impertinent upstart and fashionable *dandy*.

Greatly disconcerted by the above reception, I determined on not exposing myself to similar reproofs, which are never drawn on those who observe a proper degree of precaution and reserve. During six weeks that I remained in the country, Eusebius made me ride out, daily,

and the Abbé read to us for a couple of hours every morning. Mademoiselle de Versec also taught me to read music; and, as I had a very good voice, she gave me a few lessons in singing; the secret motives of these attentions exonerate me from being grateful for them, as it will shortly be seen that they were extremely interested. This lady would have been considered a very agreeable piano-forte player, was it not for her incessant attempts to play grand sonatas of the most difficult execution; but her fingering wanted brilliancy and effect. She also fancied herself a first-rate singer, and always chose the *cantabile*, though her voice was both shrill and harsh. In music, nothing can be more unfortunate than too much ambition; it is not enough that one should be well versed in this art, but perfection must be attained, and many who can please by their talent, often contrive to displease every one because they wish to astonish.

Mademoiselle de Versec, was the daughter of a respectable, though poor gentleman, of Burgundy, an orphan from her cradle she had been brought up by the late Marchioness d'Inglar, who always lived in the country. On that lady's death, her son, the present Marquis, appointed Mademoiselle de Versec as companion to his wife, having, by her genealogy, discovered that in former times, about Francis the First's reign, a Versec had married an Inglar. She gave herself out as the niece, or cousin, of the Marquis, for her pretentions on this point were somewhat varied.

Mademoiselle de Versec was about forty years of age, and according to the old Marchioness d'Inglar's account, she had been once cited as a model of the most refined politeness, and perfect good temper. Notwithstanding this flattering testimony it was, however, observed that she incessantly criticised whatever she saw or heard; did any one get an ap-

pointment or buy an estate, she was sure to find out that the situation neither suited his talents nor the purchase prove his taste, or it went beyond his means. If you happened to speak of a marriage that was about to be celebrated, the parties might have made a much better choice. It appeared that she alone possessed the secret of other people's dearest interests and inmost thoughts, while she was infinitely better acquainted with their affections, than they were themselves. Yet this eternal controul over the actions of her friends and neighbours, had neither the tone or rancour of open scandal; it came forth in sadness and without gall. Mademoiselle de Versec never spoke ill of any person, except with expressions of great indulgence, and she frequently, though, with some reservations eulogized the absent. Nor would she blame people's actions, merely *dreading* their consequences, which made her *extremely uneasy*. It was from *goodness of heart alone*, that

she informed herself of all that passed in families, or that she disapproved of every step and resolution they might make; in fact, she was a *sentimental backbiter*. This singular character, which only belongs to the present age, by disguising envy and malevolence, often authorizes an open condemnation of its best friends, for nothing but *too much feeling* could induce it to give an opinion; and *sensibility* is a sufficient apology for every thing.

As to the mind of Mademoiselle de Versec, it was very little cultivated; she had read some romances; and of *instructive books*, used to cite, amongst others, *The History of Vampires*, by Dom Calmet; *The Imposture of the Devils*, and *Count de Gabalis*, for she was amazingly fond of the marvellous; believed implicitly in dreams and judicial astrology; but, above all, in prognostics and fortune-telling. My uncle, who had been invited to the present festivities, which

lasted three days, arrived at Etioles in a good cabriolet, drawn by an excellent horse of his own, a circumstance that gave him great consequence in the eyes of Mademoiselle de Versec, who had, besides, admired the brilliancy of his jewels, for my uncle was in the habit of wearing several, on days of ceremony; this was done, he would say, more as an emblem of his trade, than from motives of vanity. During two whole days that my uncle passed at Etioles, Mademoiselle de Versec seemed to think of him alone; an attention which he was by no means displeased with, as he felt considerable embarrassment in being introduced to a large company, nearly all of whom were entirely unknown to him; placing herself in the next seat when theatrical performances were going on, she would plaud me with transport immediately I entered; this was followed up, by her giving my uncle an account of the actors and prin-

cipal spectators; boasting of her birth, talents, and importance in the house; and promising him some capital customers; amongst the rest she named Count Joseph, who, in another year, was to marry Edelie, daughter of the Marquis d'Inglar. At the repasts, too, she took care to prepare a seperate table for us, and seating the Abbé Desforges at one end, occupied the other herself, for the purpose of doing the honours, having previously taken the necessary precautions for our being better served than all the rest of the company. My uncle was so sensibly touched, by all these proofs of kindness, that he scarcely knew how to express his gratitude; and frequently repeated to me, with an air of the greatest sincerity, that he thought Mademoiselle de Versec, a lady of singular merit: as he dare not invite her to visit his house, his joy was extreme on her gratuitously telling him that she would feel *great plea-*

sure in cultivating so agreeable an acquaintance.

The following was Mademoiselle de Versec's project and plan of operation: she had, early in life, betrayed a great inclination for marriage, and though very ordinary (for all women who are not absolute monsters, strangely deceive themselves on this point,) she thought herself a perfect nymph in figure; because, from her being remarkably thin and tightly laced up, in whalebone, the lower part of her long waist was exceedingly slender; which circumstance was, in those days, a great mark of beauty. As to her face, she well knew that all its features were of the most irregular description; but then, according to her own opinion, her physiognomy was at once keen and expressive; Mademoiselle de Versec also thought no one possessed the charms of manner in an equal degree, with herself; when, however, she had reach-

ed the age of thirty-five, her face was all of a sudden covered with blotches, and she became horribly pimpled. All the illusive coquetry of the sex is sure to vanish, when this disgrace arrives, and proves to be without a remedy. So that, after having exhausted all the ointments, cosmetics and other *infallibles* of the day, Mademoiselle de Versec wisely determined to give up every idea of marriage. She had now been above four years in this way of thinking, and was consequently in her fortieth year: but she fancied she saw such loving symptoms manifested in the eyes of my uncle, that they soon staggered both her pride and resolution. Benigne Delorme was a plebeian, and what is still worse, a tradesman; yet, he was worth four hundred thousand francs, and, if he loved, there would be no difficulty in persuading him to give up business for so good an alliance. Such, at least, was the reasoning of Mademoiselle

de Versec, whose whole fortune consisted of fifteen hundred francs a year, and that only during her life; she had, however, on this occasion, sufficient strength of mind to sacrifice high birth and family pride.

By a coincidence, which forcibly struck Mademoiselle de Versec, for whom every thing was a presage, the Marchioness returned to Paris on the second of November, the eve of my uncle's *fête*, for celebrating the day of his patron, *St. Bénigne*, a name which, though by no means romantic enough for a lover, is very well suited to a husband. It was a practice with Mademoiselle de Versec to ask all her acquaintances what their christian names were; she did not fail to put the same question to my uncle: and, on hearing him pronounce the name of Benigne, she seemed quite amazed, exclaiming, that nothing could be more extraordinary, as St. Benigne was the Patron of Dijon, the city in which she was born! So that, when the Marchioness

announced her intention of returning to the capital, on the above day, a marvelous concurrence of *extraordinary* circumstances induced Mademoiselle de Versec to believe, that heaven had openly declared in favour of the union she was so anxious to form. She therefore hastened to send my uncle an enormous *bouquet* of *everlastings*, and although he did not appear to see through her design, in the selection of this flower, he did not feel the less sensible of her obliging remembrance. Having called to see him several times, he became so emboldened by her condescension and kindness, that Mademoiselle de Versec was at length asked to dine with us. A day being fixed, the Abbé Desforges, and many of my uncle's most respectable friends were invited to meet her, and amongst the rest, a rich merchant, with whom Benigne was very intimate, his wife, their daughter Sophie, an extremely pretty girl, and a gentleman employed in the finances,

who was to receive her hand in a fortnight. My uncle had a good cook, and a capital cellar, so that the dinner was both excellent in its kind, and very well served, on plate. There was a fine almond cake, and a large display of dried sweetmeats for the dessert, which had been sent by my mother; to all these was added an abundant supply of ices, from a celebrated coffee-house in the neighbourhood. As politics had not yet been introduced at dinner tables, the repast was animated by mutual cordiality and frankness; the healths of the ladies, and other friends, were drank; in fact, we conversed, laughed, and were highly amused. Benigne had taken the gallant precaution to purchase a small English piano-forte, which was placed in the drawing room; to this, Mademoiselle de Versec sat down, without much pressing, and, assuming a triumphant air, continued to play voluntarily for several minutes, during which she occasionally lifted up her eyes to heaven,

as if to catch its inspiration, although she merely repeated a series of themes that were long since learned by heart, and which I had heard at least a thousand times before. All the party secretly wishing to hear the end of these insipid preludes, nevertheless praised their ingenious combinations, after the fascinating *début* terminated, we were condemned to the *ennui* of hearing two Sonatas, by Clementi, each composed of three parts, an adagio, presto and rondeau, two rigadoons, and an interminable overture, all of which were most wretchedly executed, as the fair performer, wishing to surpass herself in brilliancy, only did so by her extravagance. Having, at length, arrived at the *cantabile*, and complained of an obstinate cold, which was accompanied by some forced coughing, she began, in a most doleful strain, that fine air from the opera of Tom Jones. "*Love, where is then thy Power!*" Then casting some sly and passionate looks at my uncle, changed

the air, and gave vent to the following verse of a song, well known in those days:

Ah, how my heart sighs for my beautiful swain;
Yet, how can I him of my passion apprise?
Then torturing Love, at least tell him my pain,
And bear him this message,—"Ah, how my heart sighs."

My uncle, who had no idea of being the beautiful swain, did not by any means comprehend the sentimental application of this love-sick ditty: but he was amazed at the expression of the songstress, who was so much overpowered at the end, that she declared herself unable to sing another line. Upon which Mademoiselle Sophie, yielding to the wishes of my uncle, sang in her turn, and in a voice so pure and clear, that it was worthy of one of Richer's best pupils. This evidently annoyed the former player, who did not, however, suffer her chagrin to assume the appearance of jealousy, and she had

no rival to fear, as Sophie was already publicly betrothed.

After the music ceased, all the company retired, except Mademoiselle de Versec who remained alone with my uncle, for I withdrew, to follow up my usual occupations of the evening; the chamber in which I slept and studied, happening to be directly over the drawing-room, the same chimney served for both, by which I could easily hear what was said by those who sat near the fire underneath me. Although I was then only in my fifteenth year, I had seen enough of the world, and had profited sufficiently, by my application to the early lessons of Eusebius and the Abbé Desforges, to have acquired much more quickness of perception and a greater depth of knowledge than falls to the lot of most boys of my age; this soon enabled me to see through the designs of Mademoiselle de Versec, on my uncle, with which I was very far from being pleased; particularly, as on considering

my own immediate interest, I was extremely desirous that he should never marry, a desire which I had every reason to expect would be gratified, from his having now reached the age of fifty-two, and continuing to entertain the warmest affection towards me. Many of the conversations I had held with Eusebius, added to the instruction his friendship had bestowed on me, gave rise to a degree of vanity and ambition, on my part, which was far above such an age, or the situation I held in society. I had already formed an infinity of little projects, for the future, and fully determined not to remain a jeweller; I used to say to myself, that if my uncle, without giving me any thing at present, would only guarantee, in regular form, that I should come in for his fortune, when he departed this life, I could very easily marry the daughter of a farmer-general, by which I should soon become one myself. Pursuing this train of thought, I went on building castles in the air, with my for-

tune that was to be, and which seemed infallibly secured, provided my uncle did not enter into the matrimonial state. Thus then; the project of Mademoiselle de Versec, without causing absolute uneasiness, displeased me exceedingly. Besides, after what I had experienced with my father-in-law, her artifices had no effect whatever on my opinions. It was easy to perceive that my uncle had not the least suspicion of her designs, and I was perfectly satisfied that I should get no good by opening his eyes on the subject; above all with a view of dissuading him from becoming their victim. I, however, formed the determination of discovering the mystery of their tender interviews; and, though I know it is not very honorable to listen at key-holes, there could be no harm in sitting by the fire, in winter, and while there, it was impossible to shut ones ears. No sooner, then, had all the rest of our dinner party gone away, leaving Mademoiselle de Versec and my

uncle, *tête-à-tête*, than they established themselves at one side of the fire-place; and, as I occupied a similar position immediately over their heads, and was prompted by curiosity to lend an attentive ear to what passed below, not a word of their conversation escaped me.

Mademoiselle de Versec began by telling my uncle how astonished she was, that a man of his sense and feeling had never been tempted to marry; my uncle very honestly replied, that he was too old to entertain such an idea now; and, without giving the lady time to assure him that he was still in the prime of life, added, that he had never been in love but once; about eight years ago, continued he, I became very partial to the daughter of my friend, that very Sophie with whom you dined to-day, she was then only seventeen years old, while I had passed my forty-fourth; the disproportion of our ages was great; however, love triumphed over all my scruples; her parents

would have certainly favoured my addresses, but I first wished to consult Sophie, whose reply to my declaration was decisive; I found that her affections were already engaged, and to the person whom she is now on the point of marrying. It did not surprise me at all, to find that a fine young man of nineteen was preferred; and yet I was much afflicted on the occasion. I represented, that from her lover having neither a fortune or profession, he was by no means suited to her family; her answer was, what is always sure to be made, in such cases, it implied that *constancy would enable them to surmount every difficulty*; this hope, so often delusive in love, was not chimerical in her; time, the excellent character and good conduct of her suitor, aided by a few good offices on my own part, induced the parents of Sophie to give their consent to the union. And since the above period I have renounced all thoughts of marriage.

This recital expressed as it was, with the greatest simplicity, quite confounded Mademoiselle de Versec; she remained some moments without uttering a word, and seemed totally speechless; in fact, I thought she must have given up the conversation; but, after a long pause, it was renewed; she made a variety of common-place observations, in a very languishing tone, on love and matrimony; my uncle, who was not an adept in the discussion of such subjects, confined his replies to monosyllables of approbation, till Mademoiselle de Versec terminated her visit, by wishing him a good night.

Convinced that she would cease to honour us with her visits, and even attentions, I was very anxious to know how she intended to break off the intimacy formed between her and my uncle, for it had been previously settled that they should go to each others house, alternately, three times a week, for the purpose of taking chocolate, that is to breakfast

together. I was, in some degree, the pretext for these meetings, my uncle always took me with him, in order to have me instructed in music, but her lessons seldom lasted more than five minutes; when I proceeded to the Abbé Desforges and his pupil, with whom I remained for nearly an hour, at the end of which time I returned and accompanied my uncle back to his own house.

Two days after the foregoing interview, when it was my uncle's turn to breakfast at Mademoiselle de Versec's, we went there at ten o'clock, as usual, all impatience to see how she would receive us: what was my surprize, on finding her more kind and affable than ever; at first, I thought it mere dissimulation, but on seeing the same conduct steadily pursued, through the whole winter, I then began to think I had formed a very erroneous judgment on her character, and that she never had any real design of wheedling my uncle into a marriage.

On the return of spring, I proceeded to Etioles, as before, and again saw the charming Edelie, sister to Eusebius; I found her so much grown, and improved in personal attraction, that I could scarcely keep my eyes from so many charms: for she eclipsed all who came to the *fête*, no less by her gracefulness than her accomplishments and beauty. During my visit, it was declared that Edelie was to be led to the altar, in the following winter by Count Joseph de Velmas. On hearing this piece of news, my aversion to this young nobleman increased tenfold, how little worthy did he appear in my estimation of the happiness that awaited him! Nor could I, on this occasion, possibly abstain from keenly envying those privileges which are bestowed by birth, rank, and fortune! but even the most generous, are apt to hate those whom they envy. And I own that, had it not been for my warm attachment to Eusebius, I would, from this moment have conceived an insuperable hatred towards

all privileged orders; and the impression then made, ever after produced a considerable degree of indifference in me, for the society of courtiers; neither the softness or delicacy of their manners, could any longer prevent me from feeling the difference of that politeness which springs from generosity, and the condescension which arises from pride.

The dramatic piece chosen at Etioles, this year, was Nanine; which character was divinely performed by Edelie. Owing to the excellence of my voice, no parts were allotted to me, except in musical operas, so that I went into the boxes, from whence I could freely see and admire the heroine. I was highly delighted with her mode of reciting the following passage, and applauded it with transport:

The rich man, valiant and demure,
The beauty, witty and refined,
Tho' this were plain and that were poor,
To me were first of human kind!

When the play was over, and while

waiting for the announcement of supper, the Abbé Desforges took me out on the terrace, and asked why I had so enthusiastically applauded the passage just cited. To which I replied, with an air of some embarrassment, because it seemed to be a very fine one! *very fine!* rejoined the Abbé, far from it; on the contrary, it only expresses a common-place thought greatly exaggerated, for it is not sufficient that a man should be *rich, valiant, and modest*, to become the first of mortals. If his valour and riches is accompanied by folly and ignorance, which sometimes happens, he has no claim whatever to the first place in society. These lines, like many others by the same author, only excite the applauses of the multitude, because they are mere declamations against the court, princes, and nobility. Nor would they have called forth yours, had you been born in a higher sphere. Be upon your guard therefore, my dear friend, against this disposi-

tion, at once seditious and satirical, which is daily making such a menacing progress; if you wish to preserve a just and upright mind, do not add the hateful causticity of subordinate interests to moral severity. Let not the splendour of birth and titles prevent you from blaming that which is reprehensible; but do not suffer the little-minded regret of being unable to assume certain distinctions, inspire you with an extravagant animosity. Do not judge things by any other standard than themselves; praise and condemn without exaggeration, and laugh only at that which is dangerously ridiculous.

This useful lesson affected me most sensibly. Happy are those who receive such advice at the age of sixteen, and know how to appreciate it! It was after this year's festivity, that Eusebius, having first obtained his father's consent, but without mentioning it to any of his friends, suddenly departed for

Corsica. Although not destined for the military profession, he wished to go through a campaign, and see a picturesque Island, then very little known. He concealed his plan from me, because he well knew that I should be anxious to accompany him; and, besides his thinking me too young for such an undertaking, he conceived that my uncle, from whom I expected so large a fortune, would have formally opposed it. This, as I afterwards discovered, was the reason of his not communicating the secret to me. His departure, notwithstanding a most affectionate letter which I received from him, grieved me excessively, although I could not reconcile myself to the idea of being prevented from partaking the perils which he was about to encounter, the accounts we subsequently heard, of his success, were of the most gratifying description. He remained six months in Corsica, during which time his conduct was highly distinguished in every respect, having per-

formed several acts of gallantry which I had an inexpressible pleasure in hearing related by his family and friends.

Returning to Paris, after the *fêtes* at Etioles, the intimacy between Mademoiselle de Versec and my uncle became even greater than at any former period; and with more appearance of affection, she did not renew either her pretentions or coquetry, all was now reduced to pure and simple friendship. On our going there one morning, to breakfast, we found a very agreeable personage, whom she immediately introduced; this was her niece, whose name accompanied with the highest eulogiums, had often been mentioned to us of late. Matilda was an orphan, god-daughter to the Marquis d'Inglar, and daughter of one of Mademoiselle de Versec's sisters, the wife of a merchant who died insolvent. The Marquis, who was naturally benevolent, took charge of this young female, destitute as she was of fortune or support; he brought

her to Paris, at the age of eight, for the purpose of being placed in a Convent of Ursuline Nuns, and had employed a number of masters to superintend her education, but as she was rather handsome, and nearly of the same age as Eusebius, the Abbé Desforges wisely advised that she should be left at the convent, till finally settled in life; this was the reason of our never having seen her before. On renouncing my uncle, Mademoiselle de Versec instantly conceived the project of substituting her niece; while the pleasure of forming a new match, and conducting an intrigue compensated for the sacrifice she had been obliged to make in remaining single; although she managed this affair without any precipitation, it was done with infinite art. My uncle admired the person, grace, and general deportment of Matilda, who was, on her side, very complaisant to him. He complimented her on the flowers, and beautiful water-colour

drawings of her execution which ornamented the chamber of Mademoiselle de Versec. My uncle, who drew very well himself, highly valued this talent in others, and Matilda's aunt knew how to take ample advantage of his partiality.

On St. Benigne's day, my uncle's anniversary *fête*, Mademoiselle de Versec accompanied by her niece, came at an early hour, when the latter presented him with two exquisite drawings of flowers, designed by herself and very finely framed. This offering quite delighted my uncle, who, on that very day, gave a magnificent dinner to both. Matilda having praised a small chain of saphirs, set round with pearls, which she saw in the shop, he made a point of placing it under the napkin which lay on her plate. Mademoiselle de Versec was enraptured with the grace and ingenuity of this piece of gallantry. After dinner, Matilda sang several pretty airs, which she accompanied on the guitar; all the company

spoke highly of her musical talents, and as to my uncle, he considered Mademoiselle Matilda one of the most accomplished women in Paris! Soon after this period, Mademoiselle de Versec told my uncle, that her niece was on the point of quitting the Convent, in consequence of the Marchioness d'Inglar's having obtained the situation of reader to a great princess: where, added her aunt, Matilda's person, accomplishments, natural endowments on the one hand, and powerful protection on the other, will soon lead to a desirable marriage. This communication made him sigh inwardly, and greatly increased his good opinion of Matilda: for in those days, people, in our sphere, thought it was impossible for any one to avoid making a large fortune, if he could only enjoy the privilege of approaching the great.

From Mademoiselle de Versec's niece, being the daughter of a ruined plebeian, she could, without blushing, avow the desire of marrying her to a respectable

man, who possessed a yearly income of more than fifteen thousand francs in lands and houses; not to mention a splendid stock in trade, and extensive profits of his business. The Marquis d'Inglar did every thing in his power to favour the projected match; for this purpose, he caused the Marchioness to be, as it were by accident, at Mademoiselle de Versec's, during two or three of our visits, so as to meet my uncle, and show, by her conversation, how Matilda was respected in the family. All were in fact determined to raise her in his estimation, and the plan succeeded; for, on being told that Matilda entertained a great regard for him, he lost no time in making a formal declaration of love to her, this was most favourably received, and followed by promises of mutual fidelity. The Marquis engaged, not only to present Matilda with her bridal dress, but also to give her away at the altar. It was besides settled that the wedding dinner should take place at

his house, so many honours, added to the charms of Matilda, fairly turned poor Benigne's brain, and satisfied him, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that he was going to make an excellent marriage.

CHAPTER V.

Sorrowful Reflections of Julien.—His Uncle's Marriage.—Portrait and Conduct of Matilda.—Julien's first Intrigue.

It was not without infinite regret that I renounced my hopes of fortune, and I suffered the more from having had no right to complain, as well as its being necessary to conceal the dissatisfaction I felt on the occasion; my uncle was at first rather embarrassed in his conversation with me, on the subject; but having assumed an air of gaiety, which pleased him greatly, he then freely entered into an explanation of his conduct. He said that this marriage would be extremely advantageous to me, in the end, from the great protection I should always expe-

rience from what he called the family of Matilda; finally adding, that he had secured me twenty thousand francs, after his death, even in the event of his having children; I thanked him as it became me, for the promise, and when our conference terminated, he gave me a very showy silver watch, with gold seals and a chain of the same metal, which, to be candid, afforded me much more pleasure than the promise of twenty thousand francs. While returning from the church, where I held one end of the nuptial veil, on the marriage day, February 25th 1783, the bride presented me with an emerald pin. It will be readily imagined that she received some fine ornaments for herself; my uncle, who had only to open his drawers and take them out, gave her a superb pair of ear-rings, a large ruby, set in brilliants, several valuable rings and various other jewels.

I was also invited to the wedding dinner, and having got a new suit for the

occasion, that, together with the watch and emerald pin, inspired a degree of vanity and satisfaction, which made me forget all my troubles, during that day at least; I also heard those around me, whisper, that my appearance was very respectable, that I had a good address and handsome figure; but that which afforded me most consolation, was the return of Eusebius from his Corsican campaign, by which happy event, I not only saw him again, but enjoyed the pleasure of observing that those praises, so justly bestowed on his conduct, while abroad were deserved. On returning to my uncle's, I became as dejected as ever, in reflecting that a great change had taken place in our domestic circle, by which I no longer possessed any power there; and should be, moreover, obliged to live under the controul of an imperious mistress, who would occasion a repetition of all those hardships I had experienced at the house of my father-in-law, but I was most

agreeably surprized by Matilda treating me with the greatest kindness, and desiring that I would in future address her by the title of *aunt*, and promising always to treat me as a nephew.

I had naturally a great fondness for the fine arts, which are in general most successfully cultivated, by those who love and form a correct judgment of them. I had not only acquired a good style in ornamental drawing, but could at this time execute small designs for cameos with great taste; on perceiving this turn of mine, my uncle got the celebrated Savage to give me lessons, and I soon became one of his most distinguished pupils: my talent, in the above line, was very useful in his business, as all the cameos I drew, served to ornament some article in the shop, and sold very well; I then received a handsome compensation, which redoubled my activity.

Matilda seemed quite charmed with my cameos, and begged that I would teach

her how to draw them; when I discovered, with surprize, that she scarcely knew the first rudiments of design. I did not conceal from her that, before it is possible to obtain any success in this mode of drawing, much time and great application would be required, but she contrived to dispense with both, by making me sketch the outlines of whatever subject we decided on; this done, she would give a few careless touches of the pencil and colours; after which, I was told that she never had *patience enough to finish* her drawings, and therefore left me to perform that task, though when completed, she very coolly put her name at the bottom of the designs thus terminated. All this passed in the greatest secrecy and totally unknown to my uncle. I had also frequent occasions of admiring the address with which, when in his presence, she appeared to be occupied without doing any thing in reality: she kept two

small drawings, of an equal size, and representing the same subject, one of those was merely sketched, while the other w s nearly finished. Whenever my uncle remained long in his closet, for he was himself in the habit of working on some article of jewellery, Matilda would, on those occasions, commence retouching her cameos at the other end of his table, first taking care to show him the unfinished drawing which she was going to complete: after an hour's apparent occupation, she rose and presented the other: struck with admiration at the celerity of her execution, Benigne would exclaim, it was inconceivable! and that if he had not seen it done under his own eyes, he would never have believed that such master-pieces could be produced, with only three month's instruction. On these occasions my uncle would even carry his enthusiasm so far as to maintain that Matilda's cameos infinitely surpassed those of my own execution. Well,

said I, if that is really the case, you must at least allow that I possess the glory of having formed a good scholar? Yes, he replied, but do not flatter yourself with ever having such another, for we very seldom meet with a genius like hers, twice in our lives.

Soon after this, Matilda asked me to let her into the secret of my art, for said she, if people find out that you retouch my drawings, they will then say, it is you who make them altogether. This fear was the more rational, as they would most assuredly have been right in the conjecture; and I did not hesitate, in my own mind, to think that the fine landscapes she had given to my uncle, went through a similar process, nor was I deceived in my opinion. I acted with all the discretion she required, in not divulging what had occurred, for which I was recompensed by great kindness teaching me the guitar, and making me occasional presents.

Matilda was not beautiful; as her figure wanted regularity; but she was tall and well made; to an agreeable countenance, she united a phisiognomy the most sprightly and penetrating. Without possessing much sensibility, her heart was not radically bad: when her vanity was not offended, or her plans thwarted, she was soft, obliging, even-tempered and amiable: she had neither an enlarged mind, nor cultivated understanding, but I do not think any one ever knew the art of *making the most of herself* so well, or who felt more at home in conducting an intrigue; she was full of coquetry, conceited in all things and unboundedly ambitious. Notwithstanding her abilities, Matilda had, in wordly affairs, the failing of all those who are destitute of principle; she believed neither in the existence of delicacy or virtue; endowed with a surprizing penetration for discovering the evil thoughts and treacherous intentions of those who

meditated mischief, she had no idea of dealing with the honest part of mankind, in whom she always expected to find dissimulation or hypocrisy, except when she did not take them for simpletons. This false mode, of estimating things, was the cause of many errors and imprudences in the course of Matilda's life. I accommodated myself, however, very well to her character, although as yet, I knew it but imperfectly. Incessantly occupied, and knowing what I had to expect from my uncle, the house appeared much more agreeable than before his marriage, and I felt comparatively happy: but something now happened, which soon gave rise to a number of interruptions in my time and studies. Until then, my uncle had taken the greatest care to watch over my conduct and manners, I very rarely went into the streets alone, our two shopmen always executed the out-door commissions, and I

never left the house except in company with my uncle, who only took me to the theatre occasionally; but once married, and passionately fond of his wife, he was much less vigilant and left me a great deal to myself; besides, I was now seventeen, and from time to time permitted to pay a few visits in our own street, where my uncle knew several tradespeople; but I seldom called at any other house except that of the perfumer, who lived next door to us: here I became acquainted with a very fine girl, employed to serve in the shop, and whose pretty figure and animated looks, made a deep impression on me. Adeline, for that was her name, attracted me frequently to her master's shop: I well understood the language of her fine black eyes, and she was not backward in comprehending the few words, I contrived to whisper, unobserved. She was in the habit of giving me, secretly,

small bottles of lavender or bergamot; and Matilda said, one day, smilingly, that I had for some time past been well *scented*. I now saw with uneasiness that the indiscreet gifts of Adeline, betrayed the mystery of our amour, and in a stammering tone, replied, that I certainly did occasionally call on our neighbour the perfumer. Yes, she rejoined, Adeline is a very pretty girl!.... But Julien, continued Matilda, why do you blush? What is the cause of your being so disconcerted? You take me for a blab, but you are mistaken, we are both too young to have the austerity of those who have seen their *fifty-third year*. We do not mean any harm; but, for our own comfort, there is nothing like understanding each other, as in that case all will go on well. This speech removed my embarrassment, and yet it displeased me. In spite of my inexperience, I fully felt how ill-placed it was, in the mouth of a married woman, however young she might be. As I did

not wish to assume an air of pedantry, and being very curious to ascertain what sense she attached to the insinuation of our *understanding each other*, I began to laugh, and questioned her on that subject; upon which, she very candidly told me that it would be necessary to conceal an infinity of *trifles from my uncle*, which, though *extremely innocent in themselves*, might give offence to a man of his age. I should have been very glad to know what these *trifles* were; but in preserving all her gaiety, constantly laughing and often to excess, she would never come to the point or give me any thing more than vague answers. The result of this conference was a reciprocal promise of *secrecy*, as to what passed in the house. She did not put mine to the test at first, except by occasional little banterings, when we were *tête-à-tête*, about the friends of my uncle, and even himself, also on the affected pretentions of Mademoiselle de

Versec. She retained none of the latter's lessons, but those which related to manners and language. The address of Matilda had nothing of the tradesman's wife about it, while that of my uncle often appeared ridiculous to her. Our chief source of amusement, in these conferences, were derived from Matilda's comments on the more homely and virtuous matrons of the neighbourhood, who were in the habit of visiting her: she alternately talked, and laughed at their affectation; white hands, and delicate fingers; on their little mouths, which would hardly be sufficient for a child three years old; their forbearance at table, by which they almost starved themselves to *appear fashionable;* on the importance they attached to the colour of their table linen; on the confusion and overthrow caused by the solemn days consecrated to washing; on the domineering spirit of those who presided over domestic concerns, and all whose cus-

toms or modes of speaking, betrayed the pride of superior knowledge in housekeeping. That of possession, and the supreme empire which neither admits participation, receives advice, or attends to representations from the passive benedict. It is true that we ought quietly to tolerate these little absurdities in favour of pure manners, but Matilda was unacquainted with this kind of indulgence.

CHAPTER. VI.

Continuation of Julien's Intrigue with Adeline.—He saves an Infant's Life in returning from the Tuileries.—Who this infant was.—Quarrel between Matilda and Julien.

MATILDA did not confine her discretion to keeping secrets, but even became the protectress of my intrigue with Adeline; when she knew that my uncle was obliged to go out, on business, the circumstance was obligingly communicated to me, and I took advantage of it accordingly. On his return, he never enquired how I had been occupied, except of his wife, who was sure to give the most favourable account of my proceedings. Although I profited by this condes-

cension, on the part of Matilda, it did not make her appear the more estimable in my eyes, and I had a confused notion, that in acting thus, she was influenced by some secret motive, which I should in time discover.

Mademoiselle de Versec came frequently to dine with us; on those occasions the conversation of the aunt and niece, in my uncle's presence, used to amuse me exceedingly. Matilda always took care that it should turn upon some point of morality; on which she would manifest so much severity of principle and make such rigorous comments, that my poor uncle was absolutely lost in admiration and amazement. Tears were sometimes glistening in his eyes, when with the gravity of a preacher, she continued to sustain her high flown maxims and rigid themes: Mademoiselle de Versec was also melted, and like Madame de Sottonville addressing another George Dandin, but

much more credulous than that of Molière, would frequently repeat, that he was too happy in such a wife!

Having, one day, asked Matilda how it happened that a person of her age could know so much; she informed me, that from being brought up at the Ursulines, she was extremely dull until the age of sixteen; before this period, her mind was only developed in the little frolics of a parlour boarder, which were severely punished in addition to their having drawn down a multitude of reprimands and sermons from her aunt, who was charged by the Marquis d'Inglar to scold her, because he was constantly receiving complaints against her from the inflexible sisterhood; that, at length, a female relation of the Marquis who had been married in one of the *Provinces*, and became a widow, being no longer able to support a town residence in which she had lost a husband that she adored, came

to Paris to place herself in a convent, where she could live in the utmost solitude, exclusively given up to religion and grief. The Marquis, continued Matilda, charmed with the gentleness and piety of this lady, whose name was the Baroness de ****, imagined that a woman of twenty-eight, and so virtuous, would have greater power over me than the austere sisters; he therefore intreated her to take me into her own apartments. The Baroness, who possessed only a very limited income, was under great obligations to the Marquis, and still expected he would render her important services, acceded to the proposal, without the smallest hesitation, promising to look after me with all the care of which she was capable. The Ursulines, who were consecrated to the duties of education, had numerous classes of pupils, but received no one into their rooms. The Baroness had chosen

a convent in which there were no classes. I was taken from the melancholy Ursulines to be placed under the superintendance of this young and handsome widow; who, shortly after, acquired both my confidence and friendship.

I soon perceived that my new governess had profited largely by her intercourse with the world, and possessed a mind of unusual finesse. When the Marquis came to see her, she assumed the air and tone of an Artemisa, but no sooner had he turned his back, than she would burst out in roars of laughter and give utterance to a thousand lively sallies. She, however, attended to my education, and made me read a number of very pretty romances, which assisted greatly in forming my mind; but her conversation was still more instructive; when she saw that I was a totally different person, and had thrown off the awkwardness of former habits, she used to take me out with her, telling the inmates of the convent that

she was going to visit a sick friend and pass the night in watching over her, and that we should not return till the next morning. We left the convent generally about five o'clock, and went to the theatre, thence to sup with a lady of the neighbourhood, who lived in very good style, and on supper being over were taken by her to the opera ball. On returning to the Convent, at eight in the morning, the sisterhood used to be quite grieved to see our heavy eyes and jaded appearance, admiring our sensibility and commending the *charitable offices* which we had been performing. The Baroness used to reply, in a tone of great humility, that such trifling acts of benevolence did not merit the least praise, and she was perfectly prepared to begin them again if necessary.

It was thus, that during the whole winter, we found *virtuous* and *charitable* pretexts for absenting ourselves every week, to the great edification of the sister-

hood, and a doctor's prescribing chalybeate waters, or bathing to the Baroness; always furnished us with an excuse for amusing ourselves in the country. I passed eighteen months most agreeably in this manner, and was each day more satisfied with my female mentor. But she went out alone, one morning, and never returned afterwards, having gone to England under the auspices of a noble Lord who is immensely rich. Fortunately I was no longer in want of her lessons, for by this time I knew quite as much as she did herself. The Marquis d'Inglar said he could not conceive how it was possible for a woman, who had till then been so *very prudent*, and who had shown me such good examples, to be capable of such an action, that he thought she must have been carried off, an opinion which I confirmed in the Marquis, by the account I gave him of her habitual *austerity and virtue*.

Matilda related this story with all the simplicity of profound corruption,* while it struck me with horror. I had been weak enough to laugh at her railings and jokes against those for whom I ought to have had more respect: she saw me engaged in a little intrigue; and as impropriety no longer possessed any thing repulsive to her mode of thinking, and that she thought rather highly of my talents, she concluded I freely entered into her own sentiments and opinions. Reserving all her hypocricy for fools, she was not only ignorant of how odious a want of modesty renders a woman, but even converted her depravity into the means of pleasing; for it was displayed without the least hesitation to every one whom she outraged by her dishonorable esteem. The confession of a weakness might have interested me; but deliberation in crime,

* An expression used in the Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay.

and exultation in vice, created an invincible disgust on my part, which was from this moment converted into a sentiment bordering on hatred. I blushed at my intimacy with her; and yet I did not wish to break it off suddenly at least, so that, without entering into a lengthened explanation of what I thought on the occasion, for the present, I contented myself with making a few jocose remarks on her premature experience, which she took for admiration and panegyric.

I now began seriously to think of quitting the house of my uncle, and confided this desire, as well as my contempt for Matilda, to my young protector, the Viscount d'Inglar, who told me to have patience, as his marriage took place in the following year, and he would then be his own master, when I should live with him in the quality of secretary; moreover, that if I was really determined to pursue my studies, he would take care of my fortunes, which should always be an object of the

dearest interest to him. This interview revived an emulation in me, that had been greatly relaxed since my intimacy with Adeline.

I once more felt that I was born to be something more than a jeweller, while the friendship of Eusebius raised me above myself, and was a real source of dignity. I confess, however, that I did not altogether give up my visits to Adeline; but she had no longer the power of inducing me to lose so much of my time in her society. I informed my uncle that I had decided on becoming secretary to the Viscount d'Inglar who intended to follow the diplomatic line, a pursuit that might ultimately lead to my being a secretary of legation: on which account, I entreated that he would dispense with my continuing any longer to work at the trade, promising, that I should always have my eye on the journeymen; but that, during the year which had been given me to prepare myself by the necessary

studies, for my new situation, I not only wished to pursue them, but openly declared to all my friends the exact nature of the profession I now had in view.—My uncle mildly replied, that I was about to sacrifice a certain fortune to my new-fangled notions of glory. I persisted, however, until he at length freely consented to the proposal, when our friends were immediately informed of the intended change in my situation, and amongst the rest Durand, the young man who had married the charming Sophie. Durand was both honest and amiable, he possessed considerable abilities, and was passionately fond of literature, which he always found time to cultivate even in the midst of business. As we were extremely intimate, he was delighted at the idea of my giving up the shop, and by way of familiarising me with the world, proposed taking me to a house that was frequented by a great number of wits and learned men.

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I have, since the Revolution, conversed with many young people, who fancied that those who composed the Court previous to that period, were unaccountably ignorant; it is true there might have been two or three, whose erudition did not extend even to a knowledge of orthography; but by far the greatest number do honour to the old system of education; and when such names as De Choiseul, Montesquiou, de Boufflers, Vaudreuil, de Bissy, the Prince de Beauvan, Count de Tressan, Caylus, de Thiars, Schomberg, Descars, de Genlis, Chatelux, and de S*** can be cited, or those of De la Rochefaucault, de Montesquiou, and many others who are still living, the above aspersion is as ridiculous as it is unjust.

Besides those of the court, whom I have mentioned, several individuals highly distinguished for their education and talents, were also in the habit of meeting at the house of Madame de ***, these, without frequenting the court, were connected

with the nobility by their birth, amongst the rest M. de Pompignan the bishop of Puy, and his Brother, the Abbé de Vauxelles, the Marquis de Saint Lambert, M. de Bougainville, Guibert, Condorcet, de Rhullière, &c. Madame de *** did the honors of this intellectual circle with uncommon *éclat;* during my first visit, I heard her compliment the Count de Tressan, on his agreeable romances; she also spoke to the Chevalier de Chatelux, relative to his work on *Public Happiness*, and to the Marquis de Montesquiou, about his familiar comedies, M. de Guibert's tactics and tragedy, were also the subjects of conversation, together with the poems and historical works of M. de Rhullière, the songs of the Count de Genlis, and the last theatrical productions of the Count d'Escars, a real master-piece in its way, being at once moral, witty, and animated. In this, the author has, amongst other things, introduced the History of Elmire, a woman of gallantry, which, though

confined to seven couplets, has afforded him an opportunity of developing his subject with incomparable energy and talent. The last Stanza may serve to give an idea of this charming composition:

In this sad abuse of time,
See her spring of beauty end;
The Coquette beyond her prime,
Has no lover and no friend:
'Tis in vain she would decoy,
The green nonage of some boy.
At her sighs,
Laughters rise,
Cupid flies,
What annoy!
Elmire, in wiser arts your hours employ.

When a young and handsome nobleman expresses himself in this way, it might well be asked,

Were he a plebeian, what more could he achieve?—

and when so many characters distinguished in such a variety of ways, uniting to the greatest merit, politeness and manners that were truly *national*, could be enumerated in the court circle of

those days, it is by no means fair, or liberal, either to depreciate or ridicule the young nobility of forty years ago.—And I will add, for the honour of the lower class of society, that the youth of the period alluded to, in point of ability and instruction, were far from being inferior to those of the present day, as, from the number of ingenious men and fine writers it has produced; if the system of *mutual instruction*, which is, we are told to quintuple the sum of human talents, proceeds, excessive refinement will become so universal in twenty or thirty years more, that it will be no longer possible to find any persons simple enough to become stone cutters, or shoe makers. Let us, therefore, hasten to prepare sufficient supplies of clothes and furniture, for the days of trial; we should also construct our houses with the solidity of the antients, for nothing is more likely than that the torrent of knowledge which is to be dashed down on our

heads, may reduce us to the necessity of dispensing with the *vile mechanical* part of life, leaving mere worn out tinsel to ornament our persons, and ruin our only refuge.

One day, while returning from the garden of the Tuileries, where I had gone for the purpose of meeting Adeline, on approaching the gate which leads into the adjoining street, I perceived a girl of five or six years of age, very neatly dressed and alone, to fall a few paces before a cabriolet, that must have instantly gone over her, had I not suddenly rushed forward between her and the horse, which I was fortunate enough to stop, at the very moment it was on the point of crushing her under its feet. On taking the child up, a haughty voice from the vehicle desired that I would get out of the way: it was that of Count de Velmas. I paid no attention to him, but preventing the animal from proceeding with one hand, while I raised the weeping

child with the other, what was my surprize, on discovering that I had saved my mother's little girl, Casilda! On recognizing me, the Count changed his tone to one of great mildness, and calling me by name, was about to enter into an explanation; but, without making any reply, I bowed and immediately retired, carrying the child off in my arms. I afterwards found that she had been left with a group of children, in the gardens, by her nurse-maid, Mademoiselle Lisey, who, like so many other nurses, doubtless went to join a lover whom she could not receive at home; having, as might naturally be expected, forgotten her charge, Casilda, tired of her companions, left them, and from being near the entrance, soon found her way out, where I had the good fortune to be passing when the accident occurred. I hastened to get a hackney coach for the purpose of conveying the child to my mother, but a heavy shower of rain coming on, it was some time

before I could procure one; having at length succeeded, I ordered the driver to take us into the Rue de Lombards with all possibles peed.—Mademoiselle Lisey having got home before me, had already told my father-in-law a story, which *proved* that no blame whatever could be attached to her for returning without the child, who had been consigned to her care. On entering the shop I found my mother bathed in tears, but restoring Casilda to her arms, she was soon tranquillized; on seeing this, Symon instantly seized the poor child, and began to apply a whip to her shoulders, with an admonition to be more attentive and obedient to the order of her nurse in future. I was on the point of opposing this brutal conduct, when a sign from my mother induced me to desist, and afterwards found, that had I not done so, both herself and the infant would have been still worse treated on my departure. Restraining my indignation, I took a sorrowful leave of my mother, and

without saying another word immediately quitted the house.

Nor had I any better success at my uncle's; for, on relating the dangerous situation from which I had rescued poor little Casilda, and warmly censuring the *driving mania* of Count de Velmas, who invariably went through the streets in a gallop, and when in his English carriage was always preceded by a Danish coach-dog, that had knocked down several foot passengers. Matilda stoutly took the Count's part, maintaining that people on foot were never thrown down except through their own carelessness, or children from that of their conductors, and that, consequently, the *Court Gentry* were not responsible for the imprudence of the *foot passengers*. What! I replied, an old and decrepid being, who has neither agility enough to avoid a grey hound, nor sufficient strength to resist the impetuous shock of such an animal, if knocked down, is guilty of imprudence,

while no blame can attach to the *fine gentleman?* Old men should only go out in coaches, rejoined Matilda. But if they are too poor, said I, or cannot afford to keep a servant?—In that case they should remain at home.—And if business obliges them to go out?—Julien, interrupted my uncle, in a severe tone, I am astonished to hear you oppose your aunt in this way, and must observe, that it is by no means agreeable to me. Let him go on my dear, replied Matilda, his teazing only amuses me.—The fact is, my darling, that you spoil him, and this is not the first time I have been obliged to tell you so.—But how can I help it, my love, I always forget your advice on the subject, and you ought therefore frequently to remind me of it, besides a feeling heart often renders one inattentive! This sentimetal antitheses affected my uncle so sensibly, that he could hardly repress his tears, when,

taking Matilda's hands, I thought I could hear him sobbing, as he squeezed them affectionately between both his own; upon this, she leaning over, kissed his forehead, and then turning to me observed, how good he is! Julien, we are mere reptiles in comparison to such a man!—Charmed by the compliment, my uncle took out his pocket hankerchief, and having wiped his eyes, cast them upwards, exclaiming what an angel! what an angel!

This scene, which would have no doubt amused me in any other house, did not excite the smallest disposition to laugh here; I was, in fact, too much shocked at the duplicity of Matilda, and keenly mortified to see my uncle so shamefully duped by her, to feel any thing but contempt for the one, and pity towards the other.

Reflecting on the animated tone with which Matilda took the part of Count Joseph, I was strongly inclined to sus-

pect, that she either had, or wished to have an intrigue with him; and yet, he was in a short time to marry Edelie, her benefactor's daughter, and one of the most beautiful and accomplished girls in Paris; but these were trifling considerations for a person, who, like Matilda, only thought of gratifying ambition. Under pretext of seeing the diamonds, which had been ordered for the bride, the Count often came to the shop, and I recollected several little incidents that confirmed my suspicions.

On the day after our dispute, Matilda took me aside, and gently remonstrated with me for having been so severe on Count Joseph; all that belongs to, or is in any way connected with the family of Inglar, said she, is entitled to my friendship and esteem; although, replied I, it does not prevent you from frequently enjoying a hearty laugh at their expence.—True, answered Matilda, when your friend Eusebius, who is a real pedant, hap-

pens to become the topic of conversation; you are aware, said I, that this is a subject upon which I never hesitate to give my opinion, and I now repeat, as I have always done, that the Viscount d'Inglar, is, in my estimation at least, a model of youthful perfection. That may be, she said, but allow me to say, nothing on earth can be more insipid or wearisome than what you call perfection: I prefer the natural vivacity of Count Joseph, infinitely more than the cold affectation of his cousin.—I do not think him either cold or affected, said I; then be it so, replied Matilda, and let us talk of Count Joseph: Yes! yes, I answered, I know that's a favourite subject with you. I should be most ungrateful, said she, were I not to make some return for his attachment towards me.—And pray what may the nature of this attachment be? I asked. The most pure and sentimental. That it may be the most pure, is probable enough, but that it is the *most* sentimen-

tal I am very much inclined to doubt. You are mistaken, said Matilda. Here the conference closed, by the arrival of my uncle who, from having remained at home all the rest of the day, prevented our renewing it. I was determind to force an explanation from Matilda, and could easily see that the question between her and the Count de Velmas, was one of love, although I was convinced that as yet, it had not gone beyond mere coquetry on her part. She never went out, except with my uncle, or in his carriage, which was driven by his own coachman and followed by a footman, and when she left home it was either to visit her aunt in the morning or to go to church, for she affected great piety. Nor did she ever receive the Count alone, but when he came to the shop merely came down to speak to him, and he never entered her room. It is true, I had not much experience at this time, but it appeared impossible that an intrigue, so recently began, could have

as yet assumed a criminal character. I foolishly flattered myself with being enabled to bring Matilda back to reason, and a sense of duty, if only for the sake of her own happiness, for I knew quite enough of her, to feel that it was in vain to hope any thing from her sentiments of virtue. Finally, it occurred to me, that by prevailing on Matilda to divulge her greatest secret, I should make her subservient to all my wishes, and acquire a supreme power over her, and this ascendant, would also be transferred to my uncle, thus securing me a perfect control over all the establishment. My intention was not to remain in the house much longer, but I calculated on profiting by my newly acquired influence, in procuring a good yearly allowance when I left it. An object I wished to secure, less from interest than pride. In attaching myself to Eusebius I was anxious to be not only placed above all pecuniary wants, but sufficiently at my ease, not to accept

any thing more than my board and lodging from him.

During the evening, my uncle returned to the discussion of the preceding day. Hear me Julien, said he, I am not, any more than yourself, partial to cabriolets, dogs, running footmen, or those barouche boxes, imported from our English neighbours, so preposterously high, that if the driver falls, he is sure of breaking every bone in his body: all these follies of the young nobility and gentry of the present day, only serve to make them hated by the people, and despised by the wise. Nor should the law sleep over such extravagances; on the contrary, they ought to be punished, like all other crimes tending to disturb the peace or happiness of society. But my wife, who has the honour of being allied to the house of Inglar, was brought up without thinking there is any harm in such absurd and unworthy practices; she is attached to that family, and her mode of viewing

the subject cannot be like that of people in our sphere of life. Her gratitude, towards the Inglars, is such, that with all her penetration, she cannot perceive that her little Count Joseph, is, in many respects a mere scape-grace, and I often laugh in my sleeve, at the high opinion she entertains of him, but her motives are so praise-worthy, that it will not do to contradict her on the subject. Besides, the Count's sentiments towards my family is every way worthy of his birth. He will have an immense fortune, and be a peer of France; you see how he treats us when he comes here, and what respect he pays to my wife; all this is entitled to our notice; as to his little indiscretions they will pass off with time, and we shall have the protection of one of the greatest men at court. But uncle, you neither look for employments or place, what therefore will be the use of this protection?—Of what use will it be? why to double, aye! treble, the profits

of my business to be sure!—But said I, you want to give it up, and seek for repose, or at least only keep it on, for the sake of getting the interest of your money and affording the means of living to your workmen.—That was my plan, rejoined he, but while I can add a large fortune to a comfortable independence I should be a great fool not to profit by so happy a coincidence. How is that uncle? I was not aware that these were your sentiments. —Attend my friend, he then said, I have not only made a match of inclination, but a most honorable alliance, one that gives me a prodigious rise in my trade, and which will some day or another, be of incalculable benefit to you and your children. *My children!* who am not dreaming of marriage—Oh! there is time enough to think of that; lads of your age, know nothing of what's in store for them, whereas at my time of life, a man sees into futurity at once. I tell you, therefore,

that in marrying the god-daughter and relative of the Marquis d'Inglar, and the most amiable, as well as accomplished woman in France, I have also, on the score of pecuniary interests, made a capital marriage. This tittering and laughter, is ill-timed Julien, when I am thus seriously addressing you, interrupted my uncle with severity. Ah! pardon me, my dear uncle, pray pardon me, but really I thought you were only joking. I pronounced these words in so impressive a tone, that they immediately appeased him. No! my child, he replied, that was not the case, you only see the match in two points of view, that of my wife having brought me no fortune, and of my being put to a considerable expence, by the marriage; it was necessary to present some jewels, and newly furnish a few rooms. A coach was required, for the niece of Mademoiselle de Versec, and cousin to the Inglars, this only cost me an

additional horse, the purchase of a berlin, and wages of a coachman; such are the paltry considerations which have engrossed your attention, while the inestimable advantages of the alliance, have been completely overlooked; in the first place, furnishing the diamonds for two great weddings.... But, said I, that of the Viscount d'Inglar was insured to you. — You think so, but you are wrong; replied my uncle; ask my wife, she will tell you, that it entirely depended on our marriage. Thus then, here are two great sources of profit already; but this is nothing, I am sure of the Queen's custom also. The Queen's! said I. Yes, the Queen's, that surprises you does it?—But what becomes of the crown jeweller? I then asked; he will remain as he is, answered my uncle, but I shall have to furnish all the ornaments of fancy, these are numerous, and it is on such articles that the largest profits are gained, large diamonds

have as you know, a fixed price, whereas the smaller jewels have none, the mounting and fashion giving them an arbitrary value. And to whom, I asked, are all these obligations due? to Count Joseph, said he, for although as hair brained as a monkey in some things, he is incapable of telling an untruth, and has after all a very good heart. He has spoken to the Queen, and the thing is settled: in addition to the diamonds ordered for his marriage, he has also bespoke a set of emerald ornaments which you must not fail to take to him to-morrow morning. I am obliged to be out at ten, on a business that will detain me till two, so that you must go in my stead, as I cannot confide a matter of this importance to any one else: he gives me a bouncing price, forty thousand francs! People of his stamp do not stop to bargain. What, forty thousand francs down? said I. Yes; the whole is to be paid on the eve of his marriage day. As to wedding presents,

they always pay well, for it is the father who supplies the money; this is, however, a little one he makes to the bride, unknown to her parents. The Marquis gives diamonds and other jewels to the amount of eighty thousand francs, the emeralds will not be offered till the day after the ceremony, and in private; this is a secret between Matilda, you, and myself. The idea is excellent and the present very handsome.—But why is the Count in such a hurry to get it?—He merely wishes to shew it the Queen; for which purpose he goes to Versailles, expressly, to-morrow; be punctual to the hour appointed, and recollect it is at twelve o'clock precisely.

Notwithstanding my uncle's extreme confidence in the blue ribboned duke, and peer's son, I could not help seeing something not only ambiguous but extraordinary in the history of the emeralds; upon which I resolved to question my friend Matilda. On the following morning, Agatha, her waiting maid,

brought my chocolate, and at the same time presented me with a silver coffee-pot, on which was engraved the initials of my name, six spoons, and a complete breakfast set, from the porcelain manufactory of Sevres, observing that as her mistress knew my own had been broken, she begged I would accept the present offering. Though I did not exactly comprehend the object of this attention, at such a moment, it was not the less agreeable: my uncle came, in half an hour after, to deliver the case containing the emeralds; he congratulated me on the fine present I had just received, reminding me of all the others given me by Matilda, who, he said, did not think she had yet made a sufficient return for the lessons I had given her in cameo drawing. He then boasted largely of her generosity and friendship towards me, and finally concluded by taking me to her room for the purpose of thanking her.—Soon after this, he went out to attend his appointment, leaving me alone

with Matilda, who immediately began to address me on the subject of the emeralds; I am highly delighted, said she, that you are to deliver them, as I am most anxious for your becoming better acquainted with Count Joseph; when once you know each other, there is no doubt of your being on the best terms: he possesses uncommon greatness of soul, and his generosity is excessive; so that, what with these qualities, and his rank in life, the patronage of such a nobleman will do wonders for you; he has just been introduced to the Queen's circle, and be assured, that in two or three years more, his credit at court must be immense, do not therefore reject his friendship, on which you may safely calculate.

As I wished to make Matilda explain matters, I did not interrupt this speech, but listened to the whole, as if I believed every word of it; when she had done, I began by asking, how it was possible for Count Joseph, who by no means loved the woman he was about to marry, to

think of making her an extra present, which was not only so expensive, but unnecessary in addition to the splendid diamonds already ordered? It is precisely because he does not love her, replied Matilda, that the present is made. *We cannot command our affections*, he has not a particle of love for her, and is therefore determined to make up for the want of what he cannot bestow, by all those delicate and noble acts of attention, which are so grateful to the sex.—But, said I, *attentions* that cost forty thousand francs, are rather difficult to be kept up in any family; to which she replied, that the motive for this, was peculiar and extraordinary, besides, by such a line of conduct, he would remove every cause of complaint on her part.- Yes, I rejoined, he will enrich her without confering happiness, and ruin himself to prevent her from murmuring; a new method of securing domestic felicity, it must be confessed!—Julien, replied Matilda, do you know, that you are beginning to grow

extremely caustic of late?—If I am, it is your fault, said I, as, having perceived that ridicule was so graceful in your mouth, I merely wish to imitate you, and am only a pupil of your own ; yes, said she, but you really go too far....Come! Come! my dear Julien, I am sure we do not *perfectly* understand each other yet, and it is much to be regretted that we do not. That is also your fault, said I, for while you are always reserved, I tell every thing I know ; for example, I am not as yet exactly aware of the precise nature of the Count's feeling towards yourself ; is it one of love? Hear me Julien, if you think distrust, or want of confidence prevents me from opening my heart, you are mistaken ; what have I to fear? that you will betray me, and disclose the whole to your uncle? he would never believe you, and only consider the denunciation as a proof of ingratitude, and an act of the basest calumny. Reflect on the absolute control I possess over him, and you cannot doubt of what

I have just said being the certain consequence of such a communication. At these words Matilda ceased, and I remained silent; the reasoning produced instant conviction, and immediately removed every hope of my being able to take any advantage of her secret, at least to the extent I had calculated on. This sudden reflection destroyed all the importance which I had attached to her sincerity; but my curiosity remained, and wishing to satisfy it, I renewed the conversation by asking why she persisted, in only confiding her designs and sentiments to me by halves?—It is, said she, because I fear you have still some remains of youthful simplicity in your composition, and little prejudices, which clash with every thing that is not common place, and worn out in morals, except amongst fools and dupes.—If that be your reason, said I, you may henceforth speak out, without the smallest reserve, for I protest to you, that I am totally divested of all such antiquated prejudices; this declaration settled the

point, and was as much as to tell her, I was devoid of every principle of virtue. If that is really the case, said Matilda, you shall know the whole, and be kept no longer in the dark, as to my projects for acquiring future celebrity; for doubling the fortune of your uncle in four or five years, by the extensive custom I shall be able to procure him through my connections; and on this being effected, for giving up business; obtaining him a place amongst the farmers general, and placing myself at the head of a splendid establishment, of which, I shall do the honours in such a way, as to attract the best company, by my address, elegant suppers and *fêtes:* with regard to my more immediate sentiments, I shall be equally explicit: your uncle is a very good sort of a man, and I have therefore determined that he shall always enjoy the tranquil happiness of complete credulity; this is what nature designed him for, and he shall possess it in perfection to the end of his days; as to

myself, who am only twenty, I must have a second, some day or other, and ought therefore to provide one in time. My heart is susceptible; I have inspired the Count with a most violent passion. And you partake in it? said I.—I am not insensible to it, rejoined Matilda. But how do you see each other?—In a thousand ways and whenever we like.—What *tête-a-tête*?—Is a third party necessary on such occasions?—You astonish me! What art you must possess! You are really surprizing!—Upon this she smiled, satisfied that all I said proceeded from the most profound admiration. Julien continued Matilda, let us unite our talents, youth and imagination, and we shall perform prodigies. Had you not been so young and inexperienced, it is not the part of confidant alone I should have given you to perform; but when I married, two years ago, you were but a mere child, and I was engaged with Count Joseph a few days after; but, added she, a love affair is nothing more than a lease; no, I re-

plied, in the same tone, and it is not for life either; nor does it extend to *six or nine years*, and is often given up at the end of *three*; yours has only continued eighteen months. That's all, said she, and before it is cancelled, I wish the Count either to *make* or at least begin your fortune, I have settled the point in my own mind, so that you have only implicitly to follow my instructions: in the first place, when you deliver this case, make a little apology for the abrupt manner in which you left him after stopping the cabriolet; he will receive you kindly: you can then tell him, I have been forced to change the hour *appointed*, which, instead of nine o'clock, must take place at one in the afternoon; he will know what you mean. No doubt he will, said I, for I understand it perfectly myself; you merely wish to alter the time of an assignation? How very penetrating! replied Matilda; no sooner is a secret confided to you, than you find it out!—Then you expect that I shall execute this commission do

you not?—To be sure I do, and I know that it will be of the greatest future advantage to you; it will immediately lead to a close intimacy between the Count and yourself; for, on perceiving that you are in my confidence, he is sure to follow the example, by making you the depositary of all his secrets.—I can listen to *your* secrets, said I, but I should reject all those of the Count, in this way, with the utmost disdain. There is no sacrifice that I would not have made, to bring you back to a sense of duty, and induce you to give up an intrigue which must end in dishonour, and ruin; judge, therefore, if after what I have said, I feel any disposition to obey you on this occasion! The foregoing speech stupified Matilda, she looked at me without seeming to comprehend or understand me, and then exclaimed, Julien, are you mad! what are you thinking about? does *this* spring from artifice or jealousy!.....Are you in love with me yourself?——As she put this last question, the clock struck

twelve, upon which I rose, and hastily assuring her that I was neither one or the other, hurried to the Count's, and having very formally delivered the case of emeralds, to him, without making an *apology* or entering into any explanation except that of requesting a written acknowledgment, I immediately quitted the house.

For two or three days after this, Matilda continued to cherish the idea of my being really amongst the number of her admirers; but, when finally convinced to the contrary, she neither betrayed spite or anger. However, notwithstanding her extreme duplicity, I could easily perceive, that having only wanted an accomplice in her confidant, she now regarded me as an enemy, and would thenceforth take every opportunity, suggested by her accustomed artfulness to injure me.

CHAP. VII.

An unexpected event.—Theatrical Scenes.

THE marriage of Count Joseph was on the point of being solemnized, and only waited for the arrival of his father, the Duke de Velmas, who had been some time on one of his estates in Lorrain; but owing to the receipt of a letter, which stated that he had fallen dangerously ill and was on the point of death, the Count instantly set off to join him. About eight days after, Matilda, while returning from her aunt's and passing near the Carrousel, observed an elegant *vis-à-vis* that had just broken down, and a fine looking female standing near it, surrounded by a crowd of people who had seen the accident happen; as the livery of this lady was extremely well known, Matilda ordered her carriage to stop, and sent the footman to say she would be happy to convey the Baroness de Blimont to any

part of the town she might be desirous of going. The message was graciously received, but wishing first to know who it came from, the servant named Madame Delmour, wife of the famous jeweller, upon which the Baroness immediately accepted the offer, entered the vehicle, and after expressing a thousand thanks for Matilda's politeness, gave her address near one of the fashionable Boulevards, when it drove off.

The world is generally apt to exaggerate good as well as evil; because plain and unadorned truth never appears sufficiently energetic for conversation. Boasting, and a desire to relate extraordinary adventures have, in fact, given rise to as many calumnies as premeditated wickedness, and to eulogiums more fulsome than flattery itself. Mademoiselle de Versec having sang the praises of her niece in society, Matilda was considered as a woman greatly distinguished both for natural talents and mental acquirements: to render her marriage, with a

jeweller, still more singular, it was also reported that she was the daughter of a respectable country Gentleman, and that my uncle's fortune exceeded a million of francs. The Baroness de Blimont had heard all these stories, and from having no acquaintance with the Marquis d'Inglar's family, she believed in them implicitly. Her demeanour, towards Matilda, was therefore of the most kind and flattering description; she promised to call at my uncle's, on the following day, to reiterate her thanks for this act of civility: arrived at the door, Matilda insisted on seeing her upstairs, when she was quite surprized at the splendour and elegance of the apartments, covered with pier glasses, richly gilt, and perfumed throughout. Nothing escaped the observation of Matilda, even to the number of servants in livery, or the porter with his large belt, slowly opening the immense folding doors of the entrance.

Matilda was transported with joy at the above adventure, and on her return home,

told us every thing that occurred in a tone of the utmost exultation, for great names and titles intoxicated her brain still more than they did that of my uncle.

The Baroness came the next day, according to promise, and minutely examined every article in the shop, where she purchased jewels to the amount of two thousand crowns, which were immediately paid for with good bills, a circumstance that completed my uncle's high opinion of her character. She overpowered Matilda with caresses, frequently repeating that she wished to see her often, and hoped they should soon have some music together. Matilda then ventured to propose that the Baroness would do her the honour of coming to pass an evening with us, to which the latter very readily consented. A day was fixed, and on going away she left us all in extacy at the charms of her address and manner. I confess to have participated in this feeling, for I experienced her affability in a very remarkable degree,

which my uncle and his wife attributed to the *passion* she had taken for the latter; but my own vanity convinced me, that she was captivated with my appearance, an idea which flattered it not a little. During the dinner, nothing was spoken of but this exquisite *personage*. How very interesting and clever she is! Matilda would exclaim; and handsome! added I; and elegant! cried my uncle. After this, Julien, who can say that the court gentry ever attempt to beat down the price of any thing? and don't you see, added Matilda, that previous to coming, she had evidently determined to lay out six thousand francs, for no female ever carries so large a sum about her.—But wishing to pay ready money, she had provided those bills for the occasion. What excessive delicacy! Yes, replied my uncle, gravely, swallowing a glass of anniseed, that was truly delicate! and all on your account, my love!—Here I asked Matilda, if she knew how old the Baroness was, I know nothing more of her, said

than her name, which is one of the most dashing at court, and her rank: she has besides, a house that proves her to be amazingly rich; and as she told me of her being a widow these four years I should imagine her age to be about seven or eight and twenty, but she may be younger. To me, Matilda's conjectures on this point did not appear by any means correct, and from her general aspect, as well as the soft tone of her voice, I did not take the Baroness to be more than twenty-one.

Matilda was now wholly absorbed in one idea, that of preparing a charming evening party, for which purpose we had not more than five days; she was painfully anxious for Count Joseph to form one of the company: in the first place that he might add to its grandeur, and in the next, she wished to enjoy the triumph of giving a grand supper to the Baroness de Blimont, in his presence. She found no difficulty in persuading my uncle to invite him, and we had every reason to

expect he could attend, from having been told at his father's house, that the Duke had been declared out of danger, and the Count would therefore return to Paris almost immediately. Notwithstanding their great intimacy, Matilda was not better informed on this subject than ourselves; though so careless in conversation, she was extremely circumspect as to writing: on the other hand, from her being very deficient in orthography, and not wishing to compromise either her understanding or reputation; she had never until then, addressed any written communications to her lovers; we had a council as to the other persons who ought to be invited. I proposed Sophie, the wife of my friend Durand, but she had a charming voice, and Matilda, who wished to display her own vocal powers, was afraid of being eclipsed, and therefore rejected the proposition. She also objected to every one named by my uncle, none of whom were sufficiently *genteel*, and added that, it was necessary to limit the party to a

select *coterie*, because the conversation would then be more animated and the music more agreeable. Pursuant to this decision, she only invited Mademoiselle de Versec, M. de Lorme, whom she intended to present to the Baroness as a wit and man of letters; the last and only addition made to her list, consisted of an old counsellor of parliament, and his wife a woman of fifty, friends of Mademoiselle de Versec, the cause of these being asked was, I really believe, solely on account of their having a carriage and livery. She observed that with the above, if the Count *arrived in time*, and we could have G***, so bewitching for his songs, and amiable for his gaiety, the party would be perfectly complete and the evening delightful. G*** who was never in the habit of rejecting the advances, or refusing the invitations of a pretty woman, promised to come and kept his word. I was appointed to prepare the cards of invitation, and care was taken to send one to Count Joseph; this office per-

formed, we had nothing to think of now, but arranging the apartments for the reception of our visitors. The whole house was accordingly put in order, and on the morning of the grand day, all the vases which stood in the drawing-room, were filled with the most beautiful flowers that could be procured in Paris, and some hours after, a general fumigation of sandal and cedar wood took place in the hall and on the stair-case; while this was going on, the preparations for the supper proceeded with equal celerity, and nothing could be more choice or elegant. I acquitted myself very cheerfully, and with the utmost zeal in the various duties allotted to me by Matilda, who was so enchanted at the honour about to be conferred on her, that all her rancour seemed to have been dissipated; but I positively refused to accede to a wish manifested by my uncle, of serving *a dish of my own preparing* at the dessert, being sure of his repeating, as he always did, when handing round his sweet

meats, *this is my Nephew's handy work.* As I felt a wonderful increase of my habitual vanity on this occasion, I was by no means ambitious of having any direct allusions made to my origin before those who were about to form our party.

We began our toilet as early as six o'clock; my uncle wore his best powdered peruke, gayest coat, his two watches, diamond rings, and gold buckles. Matilda's hair was dressed by Leonard, and mine by Gardane, two of the most celebrated hair-dressers of the day. The above ceremony completed, we were all three seated in the drawing room, which was splendidly lighted, by eight. The first arrivals was the Counsellor and his wife for they were extremely regular in their hours and never sat up late; next came M. de Lorme, G***, and Mademoiselle de Versec, more adjusted and puffed out, than I ever saw her, although she did not know that the Baroness de Blimont was to sup with us, not having seen her niece for above eight days before. The only per-

son now wanted was the queen of the *fête*. Matilda, who had dignity enough to contain herself, did not say a word, but it would be difficult to describe with what anxiety we waited her arrival, when suddenly a coach was heard to stop at the door, upon which my uncle and self rushed down to receive the Baroness, she had already descended from the carriage, my uncle offered her his arm, I followed them up stairs, and we entered the drawing room, while the servant announced in a loud voice, the Baroness de Blimont. Matilda came forward to meet her, every eye was fixed on the beautiful Baroness, and all were occupied in comtemplating her, as she approached the lustre which shed additional splendour on her charms; as to myself, Matilda, and my uncle; we were struck mute with astonishment and surprise!.....This will be accounted for, when I add, that in the ornaments of her head, neck, and arms, we recognized the emeralds I had been commissioned to dery to Count Joseph! As may well

be imagined a thousand confused thoughts crowded in rapid succession on our minds at this unlooked for sight. It was however necessary to dissimulate on the occasion, although on the other hand, no explanation could have removed our suspicions. Matilda having made a poweful effort over her own feelings, took the Baroness by the hand, and conducted her to a seat, at the same time introducing Mademoiselle de Versec, who, instead of making up to the Baroness with that fullness of heart, which she always manifested towards women of rank, coldly withdrew a couple of paces, and contented herself with making a very distant bow. Matilda, completely unhinged, sat down by the Baroness, who taking the general air of embarrassment she observed in those around, for the timidity of citizens, lost no time in breaking the silence that reigned, and opened the conversation by saying, that she came rather late in consequence of having had a visit t pay to the Bourbon Palace.—Ah! s

Matilda, that accounts for the splendour of your ornaments. They are extremely beautiful, and must have cost an enormous sum ?—Eighty thousand francs, carelessly replied the Baroness ; I bought them in England, about six months ago, although this is the first time they have been put on.—Such was the Baroness de Blimont's story, though a fortnight had not elapsed since the case had been consigned to Count Joseph. I should have thought they did not cost you quite so much; rejoined Matilda. At these words, which were pronounced in a tone of decided irony, all the company smiled, except the Counsellor and his wife, who, from a tranquil residence, and quiet life, in an obscure quarter of Paris, were totally ignorant of the scandalous chronicle circulated in the fashionable world. The Baroness now perceived that she could no longer calculate on the enthusiasm which her first appearance inspired, and without caring about the cause, she determined to compensate for its absence

by effrontery and confidence, a resolution which seemed to require no effort on her part. On casting her eyes round the room, and discovering G****, she paid him a number of handsome compliments, in a most seducing tone; then, taking his arm, led him to the piano-forte, and sat down close to him. I had placed myself behind Matilda, who sat between Mademoiselle de Versec and the Baroness, and was about to follow the latter on her going to the instrument, but stopped to hear the ensuing little dialogue, of which I did not miss a single syllable. Is it possible, whispered Mademoiselle de Versec, that you can receive, and go to all this expence for such a woman as the Baroness de Blimont?—What, not receive a lady of the Court! replied my aunt.—She never puts her foot into the Court, rejoined Mademoiselle de V——, except when all the world goes, and is only seen at the Princes, on the occasion of their houses being thrown open to all those who may have been already pre-

sented. Besides, ever since the death of her husband, this woman has been entirely discarded from good company.—Is it possible!.....She is moreover irretrievably dishonored.—I had no idea of it—— You ought to have consulted me, I should then have told you that it is above six weeks ago since she contrived to turn Count Joseph's brain, and that she is so bad a character as to make us all fear he will be ultimately ruined. M. de Lorme is quite shocked to find such a creature here—Good heavens!.....You must tell him.....I will settle it, your extreme innocence and want of experience will excuse you. This conclusion of Mademoiselle de Versec created such an irresistible inclination to laughter, on my part, that I instantly left the spot lest it should burst forth in spite of me. Matilda, who was struck dumb by what she had just heard, remained a whole hour in her chair, without saying a single word, and absorbed in profound

thought. There was in fact nothing wanted to complete her humiliation and chagrin; instead of a brilliant triumph, she was covered with shame and confusion; our preparations, attempts at being elegant, all that had been done to set off the evening became sources of the utmost ridicule. In her guest Matilda discovered a rival, and one who was not only fascinating by her figure, but engaging for her talents and manners. This picture was equally curious and moral. I have since often thought, that if the history of women who are thus engaged in the career of vice was known, many scenes quite as humiliating as the above would occur in society; scenes which make them pay dearly for their frivolous successes and abandoned triumphs.

While Matilda endeavoured in silence and despair to stifle her anger and resentment G****, as usual, sang divinely, and with that degree of originality, which in all accomplishments marks real talent

Having asked the Baroness to sing, she consented, and acquitted herself in so brilliant a style, that all the male part of the company applauded her with the utmost transport, and frequently repeated the expression of their admiration. Even the old Counsellor was moved, and swore that he had not heard such a voice since the celebrated *Lemaure*. Matilda, who had flattered herself with the idea of shining in a few romances, accompanied by her guitar, was obliged to acknowledge all her inferiority, and refused to play, alledging as the cause and in a tone of bitter dissatisfaction that she had a violent pain in her head.

Mademoiselle de Versec, who, notwithstanding her contempt for the Baroness, was dying with impatience to display her powers on the piano, begged me in a whisper, to accompany the Baroness in a duet, in order as she said, to complete this *singular evening*. I answered that nothing would please me better, if she had no objection to accompany us

on the instrument, she nodded assent; taking care that her condescension should have all the merit of extreme complaisance, on going to the piano, she went rapidly over the semitones with the affectation of a great musician, and then favoured us with a few of her well-known preludes. The Baroness, availing herself of the pause which followed, highly praised the execution and fingering of Mademoiselle de Versec, who, from that moment evidently became more reconciled to her. We next proceeded to sing the duet, which was of the most sentimental description, the second fell to my lot; but such was the grace and expression displayed by the Baroness, that all the company, except Matilda, were quite charmed, particularly Mademoiselle de Versec, who, delighted with the praises just bestowed by her niece's rival, and wishing besides, to show how feelingly alive she was to the effects of music, the grand pretention of amateurs, greatly exaggerated her emotions. This was a

new triumph for the Baroness and completed the despair of Matilda, when the announcement of supper put an end to our music: while at table the Baroness, who had won the hearts of all, felt the advantages she had gained, and made herself more agreeable than ever, attracting the undivided attention of every one. The conversation was gay, animated and decorous; Matilda, alone, thoughtful, absent, and inanimate, took no part in it. The Baroness occasionally enquired how her head-ache was, upon which she would stammer out a disjointed monosyllable; labouring under disappointment, rage, and irritability, she sank beneath the natural boldness, experience, and superior graces of her rival. She might well have exclaimed:

My wondering genius trembles before thine!

Matilda's only thought now was, how she could contrive to break up the party, but she found it impossible to effect this, owing to the many anecdotes with which the Baroness continued to relate, in which

she was ably seconded by G****. Above an hour had passed thus agreeably before the table was cleared, when the door suddenly opening with a great noise, who should appear but Count Joseph! He had just returned from Lorrain, and on finding the invitation on his table, hastened to obey the summons, without even changing his dress; he began to apologize for this act of rudeness, but had not time to conclude, before his eyes came in contact with the Baroness: he saw the emeralds, and stood petrified at the sight! she did not however betray the least embarrassment, but nodding to him, with a smile of great affability, observed that room must be made for him at the table. The company moved up, but the Count was so disconcerted by the black looks of Matilda, and cold reception of my uncle, that he knew not how to turn himself. I rose and offerd my chair, which he refused; however, I at length succeeded in placing him opposite the Baroness, and took the

next chair for myself. The equilibrium being somewhat restored, matters went on with great spirit, the Baroness redoubled her gaiety, several toasts were given, while G****, aided by Matilda's rival, formed the design of making my uncle tipsey, in which they succeeded most effectually. Warmed by the frequent bumper, Benigne soon resumed his natural good humour, and was besides extremely gallant to the Baroness. The laugh, song, and chorus now went alternately round, and the visitors would have most willingly remained at table much longer, had not Matilda, worn out with jealousy and indignation rose from her seat, and going up to my uncle, who, by this time, could scarcely walk, she insisted on his retiring, for which purpose he quietly took her arm, and was led out: finding that there was no appearance of Matilda's return, the rest of the company took their leave soon after,—thus terminating this memorable evening.

CHAP. VIII.

Continuation of the foregoing.—Matilda's projects of Vengeance against Count Joseph and the Baroness.

Matilda passed a great part of the following day, in scolding every body in the house, particularly my uncle, whom she reproached bitterly for his intemperance on the preceding night. Benigne, who was himself far from being in a good natured mood, retorted, by complaining of her having introduced the mistress of Count Joseph to his table and acquaintance; on the other hand, the conduct of de Velmas so dishonorable in a young nobleman on the point of marriage, gave him considerable uneasiness, lest he should lose his forty thousand francs; although this was the first time my uncle ever spoke in an angry tone to his wife, the quarrel was extremely violent.

Mademoiselle de Versec also came for the express purpose of giving some opinions on the conduct of her Niece, which were very badly received by the latter. When she retired, Matilda sent for me, into her room, where I found her walking with a hurried step to and fro, she was extremely pale, and her eyes so swollen, that I really felt inclined to pity her, however pleased I might have been atthe humiliation which led to her present wretchedness; when I appeared, she threw herself into an armed chair, and putting her handkerchief to her eyes, seemed in such an agony of grief, that I could no longer withhold the consolation of which she seemed to stand so much in need. I therefore took her hand, and pressing it between mine, said, forget him!—Yes! She vehemently replied, when I am reveriged!—These words instantly removed all my sympathy, in proving that pride and resentment was the sole cause of her suffering. Ah! Julien, added Matilda, what a monster he must be! And to

what a vile creature has he not sacrificed me!—After all, I rejoined, you surely cannot regard the Baroness in any other light than as a woman who is merely *without prejudices*.—But I hope you do not compare me to a kept mistress? that's going rather too far, Julien,—*kept*, is certainly a very severe term; and to receive a present cannot well be construed into keeping—What! Not a present of forty thousand francs, and which she considers double that sum, for it seems he had the meanness to tell her such was the case.—But who knows whether she is not in the habit of making rich presents to him?—M. de Lorme said it was notorious that the conduct and manners of this woman were those of a courtesan and that one who has, like her, had the advantage of birth and education, must be destitute of all pride, talent, or even common sense, thus to expose herself. Ah! Julien, if fate had put me in her place, I should have cherished the noble ambition of attaining the very first rank in society;

become a widow, I would have married a prince of the blood, and perhaps, I might have conquered a throne.—A throne?—And why not? in travelling over Europe amongst so many kings, would it be impossible to find a fool or dupe?—This sally, which made me laugh heartily, suspended her rage for a few moments; but soon resuming her former strain, she continued, Julien, you never liked the Count, and he detests you; now is the time to be revenged!—How?—This woman is very much pleased with you; I saw it, and am too good a judge in such cases so be mistaken, therefore supplant the faithless wretch!—I have not the least doubt, said I, but there may be a possibility of seducing the Syren, and pleasing her for a short time; but the son of a confectioner and nephew of a jeweller, will never be able to supplant a lover who is no less highly favoured by birth than fortune.—Oh! those are advantages which only dazzle people in our class, and not persons who

move in her sphere.—But you forget that the Baroness is fond of presents which cost eighty thousand francs, and unless I empty my uncle's shop where are they to come from?—You are quite handsome enough to dispense with making any, and have merely to contrive some means of being introduced at her house.—That's already done, for she has asked me there on Wednesday evening—Nothing can be more apropos, and it proves she has a design on you; go, therefore, and all that remains to be done after, is to write her a declaration of love on Thursday, on Friday; she will give hopes that may be realized on Saturday, but the affair must not be precipitated, having once begun the work it ought to be completed, and I will tell you how to win a coquette—I am sure no one can do it better.—Pretend to be passionately in love with her, and violently jealous of the Count, whose disgrace and banishment must be insisted on.—She will never consent to that.—Pardon me, I am certain she does not

care a straw for him, as nothing can be more insipid or tiresome than his society. —You did not always think so meanly of him.—I never thought him otherwise, and only yielded to the attachment, he seemed to have for me. The Baroness, who loves variety, is already heartily weary of him; so that you are sure of getting him turned off; she may then find another still richer, but shut your eyes to that, as you will be the man of her choice and the *real* lover. Besides, her experience and knowledge of the world will enable her to complete your education; she knows how to conduct negociations with men in power, and will soon provide for you; finally, our enemy will be humbled. Here are advantages! Without mentioning how much obliged the Inglar's and his own family will be, at your breaking off his connection with this dangerous character.

I had not the least inclination to enter into this intrigue, but suffered myself to be led on, by a belief that if I rejected

the proposition, Matilda might have thought I dreaded the resentment of Count Joseph; so that deference to the opinions of a woman for whom I entertained the most sovereign contempt, got the better of my principles and wishes on this occasion. Having maturely reflected on the conduct I ought to pursue in declaring myself the rival of a Duke's son; it occurred to me, that the Count would endeavour to crush me, by the superiority of his rank, and lampoons on my birth, I therefore determined to deprive him of this engine, not only by making no secret of my origin, or of the trade I had exercised, but even in occasionally recurring to them both, as a matter of self congratulation rather than a disgrace. This is by far the wisest and most prudent course for all those, who have risen from the lower walks of life to pursue; and the only one which shelters them from the effects of ridicule and malevolence. To suffer from the former, two things are necessary, the impertinence

of him who applies it, and an embarrassed air on the part of those against whom it is directed. It is a ball, which sent quietly back and with a little address, falls on the head of him who threw it.

I went, therefore, to the Baroness on the day of invitation, and arriving about seven o'clock, found her, together with four more ladies, also discarded from the society of more select company, dressed in the highest style. The male visitors, to the number of fifteen, were of the first distinction, consisting of courtiers, literary characters, distinguished artists, and financiers. The Baroness received me with her accustomed politeness, and no doubt to justify my introduction, said a great deal about the services rendered her near the Carrousel by Madame Delmour, whom she called my aunt; a studied eulogium was then pronounced on the supper we had given her, and a few moments after, I heard her tell two or three of those who stood near, that I had been *brought up* with the Viscount d'Inglar, whose *intimate friend* I was;

adding, that I was a very *promising young man*, and that my uncle, who was *immensely rich*, intended to purchase a high situation for me in the finances.—This effort, to set me off, amply proved her kind intentions, in my estimation at least, and I endeavourd by a proper degree of modesty and reserve to merit the good opinion she had formed.

Count Joseph did not make his appearance till half past eight, and seemed not only surprized, but much embarrassed on seeing me there; he had, during the morning, written a letter full of falsehoods to my uncle, for the purpose of explaining by what means the Baroness got possession of the emeralds; in this communication, it was also stated, that he could not pay the forty thousand francs for some months. The above circumstance rather checked his pride and vanity; nor did he seem at all disposed to meet the Nephew of a dissatisfied creditor. Play having commenced, I departed extremely well pleased with my visit. Although Matilda continually urged

me to forward my declaration, I determined to wait a little longer. Two days after this visit, the Baroness invited me to a ball and supper; I did not fail to attend, and was charmed to find my friend Durand there. He told me that if I came to breakfast with him the next day, he would tell me the reason of his coming to see the Baroness so often, I therefore promised to be with him at nine o'clock on the following morning.

Dancing did not begin till the arrival of Count Joseph; having shone in those of the Marchioness d'Inglar's *fêtes* for several years, and possessing a good figure my success on the present occasion was so great, and that of the Count so circumscribed that he could not possibly restrain his ill humour; the ball closed about half an hour before supper, when eight or nine of the party having assembled round the fire place, the Count, who had a watch chain composed of precious stone and pearls, very finely set, was requested by one of the persons near him to let him see it; on being returned, he pre-

sented it to me, observing in a tone of great irony, would you like to examine this;none has a better right to know what is good in *jewellery*. There are always persons ready to applaud observations of this kind, no matter how insipid or even vulgar they may be; some of the by-standers smiled, I pretended not to understand him, but very deliberately took the watch into my hand, and after looking at the chain for three or four seconds, let both coolly fall on the marble hearth, where they were instantly dashed to pieces. Pardon! pray pardon me, Count, I then cried; this accounts for my not being able to learn my uncle's trade, for whatever they entrust me with is sure to be broken, I am so very awkward. At these words, the laugh was completely turned against him, and though evidently in a dreadful rage, he concealed it, for experience had probably taught him, that a joke such as that which he just practised on myself, can only be successfully retaliated by one of equal point and spirit; he knew, therefore,

that anger in this case would have only added to his mortification, and prudently joining in the laugh, he assisted me in collecting the scattered fragments, observing in a tone of forced good humour, that I ought in all conscience to *repair* the articles thus broken; to this I replied, that nothing could be fairer, and if he sent them next day, it should be done with great pleasure. The Baroness, who was seated near us, did not lose a particle of the above scene, and was so charmed with my presence of mind, throughout, that she came up to me two or three times before we retired, and whispered that I was really *delightful*. After supper, the party set down to cards, when play soon became very high and the Count entered into it with the utmost avidity; from my being a mere looker-on, I saw him lose two thousand Louis d'Ors, in less than an hour; and took my leave at one o'clock, deeply lamenting the fate of Edelie, who was destined to become the wife of a man so little calculated to make her happy.

CHAPTER IX.

History of the Baroness de Blimont.

ALTHOUGH kept up much later than usual, I did not fail going to my friend's at the hour appointed, and during breakfast, related all our adventures with the Baroness, at which he laughed most heartily. Julien, said he, I am only twenty-nine, and cannot have had much experience, but a virtuous attachment, long opposed, has served to ripen my judgment, a correct line of conduct and irreproachable character was required, not only to preserve the affections of her I loved, but to maintain the good opinion of her parents. I was even called upon to undergo some singular trials, and had the good fortune to acquit myself with honor; the consequence is, that I am now the happiest of men. If you have another hour to spare, continued my friend, I will relate the

last of these trials, but in order to make my story more intelligible it is necessary that I should begin with a rapid sketch of the Baroness de Blimont's life. I cheerfully accepted the offer, when Durand, renewing the conversation proceeded nearly in the following words:

History of the Baroness de Blimont, or the Courtesan from Principle.

The Baroness de Blimont is the daughter of an old commissary of war, and I need not tell you that fortunes are made in such situations. Rich and beautiful, she soon had a numerous train of admirers; her father, for many years a widower, was convinced that if daughters merely knew how to dance and sing well, they ought to be considered as highly accomplished, particularly when they happen to have a large fortune. Seraphine, the name by which she was

then called, enjoyed perfect liberty at the age of sixteen, her only governess being little more than a companion, entirely devoted to all her wishes, and who thought of nothing else but how to please and flatter her young charge. At once witty and animated, she read all the fashionable works of the day, and was enchanted with those which, in affecting to inculcate morality, only flatter our inclinations and stimulate the passions. This species of reading soon had the effect of disturbing her imagination, while it poisoned her mind and corrupted her manners.

When she had reached her nineteenth year, the Baron de Blimont placed himself on the list of those admirers, who aspired to the honor of Seraphine's hand. The Baron, with a fine sounding name, possessed a shattered fortune, and ruined reputation. And although he had been distinguished in the field, he was both a gamester and a libertine, totally destitute of personal respectability, the Baron was

also a passionate admirer of the Encyclopediæists and received one of their diplomas of *superiority in genius*, to which all the partisans of modern *philosophy* are *by right* entitled. These were powerful claims to the hand of Seraphine, and they accordingly enabled him to obtain a preference over his rivals. He had for some years corresponded with Voltaire, and used to show letters dated from Ferney, in which compliments were paid to him on his *philosophy* and mental qualifications, a degree of glory that quite dazzled Seraphine. Having, therefore, every reason to hope that his suit was agreeable, the Baron requested a private interview and it was granted, Seraphine received him in the drawing room, accompanied by her governess; but the latter, after a few preliminary compliments had been made, retired, leaving them to follow up the conversation *tête-à-tête*; no sooner had she withdrew, than the Baron immediately declared himself, and concluded by

stating that, previous to addressing her father, he wished to know whether the step he had taken was agreeable, for if otherwise, he would thenceforth renounce his pretentions to her hand, although he could not cease to love.

Seraphine, who though so young, was even now quite a woman in her address and manner, gracefully answered, that she felt and appreciated the delicacy of such conduct. I therefore fully authorise you, continued she, to demand my hand, as I am sufficiently acquainted with your principles and sentiments, to feel satisfied that this union will render us both happy. I had determined not to marry any one who did not rise above these prejudices, which still continue to govern fools and vulgar minds; and would, of my own accord, have chosen you in preference to ony other. At these words the Baron broke into the most lively expression of joy, but Seraphine interrupting him, added, you have, by this proceeding, acquired the greatest possi-

ble right to my esteem, and I shall therefore prove, on my side, that I am not unworthy of your confidence. Deception, the most odious of all vices, is unhappily that which your sex but too frequently find in women, it has ever been hateful to me, and I am about to prove the assertion, by candidly informing you that I have a lover, and wish to retain him. We cannot be united, his person being previously engaged, but our hearts are free, and were therefore exchanged. Having received my vows, I can neither betray them, or deceive you.—Here the Baron, unable any longer to restrain his enthusiasm and admiration, fell at the feet of the *ingenuous* Seraphine, and rapturously exclaimed, incomparable woman! who pays equal respect to the sacred rights of truth, and to the no less imperative duties of love. Yes! I feel that I am worthy of this heroic and noble confidence. Your lover shall be my friend, and the dearest I have, if only faithful to you, and who can be otherwise to so

many charms and such exalted virtue!- What! Julien, cried Durand at this part of his narrative, does not this affecting scene extract a single tear! why your heart must be made of adamant. Is it possible, I rejoined, that such an instance of moral turpitude as this, can ever have been seriously advocated, or that there have been people so barefaced as to applaud it when related?—I see you are not born to comprehend the sublimity of the new system; then you have not read the *Philosophical Dictionary*, together with so many *immortal* productions of a similar kind, and by the same author, nor the many fine moral articles written for the Encyclopædia Helvetius, on the Mind, &c. &c. &c. You have kept to the old principles, which are as much out of date with a certain class, as the full-bottomed wigs, and enormous buskins of Louis the Thirteenth's Reign. *We have changed all that*, my friend; young people must have a young morality, and I promise you, that there is no possi-

bility of your finding a more convenient one than that promulgated by the philosophers of our new school. *Passions, independence* and *voluptuousness*; this is the motto, no wonder therefore that it should have proselytes. But to proceed with my story. Seraphine, delighted to find a husband who was really so worthy of her, it was mutually agreed between them, that the Baron should ask the consent of her father that very day. He did so, and it was given, mutual vows were then exchanged; a large supper party followed, and the intended marriage was publicly announced. A little before the company removed into the supper room and while all, except Seraphine and the Baron, were occupied at play, the elegant Chevalier d'Herbain came in; this was a young man, in whom the good taste of a brilliant though not solid education, had tempered without eradicating vice, rendering it the more dangerous by embellishing it with a glossy exterior. Many teachers of the present

day may be compared to those ignorant and idle gardeners, who, instead of tearing out the noxious plants, are satisfied with merely cutting off the tops; leaving the roots and seed, which they cover with beautiful flowers, whose brightness are soon tarnished by the venemous herbs that grow and multiply under their stems. The Chevalier d'Herbain possessed that species of inoffensive fatuity which men barely tolerate, without turning into ridicule, and which, in the eyes of women, is nothing but gracefulness and gallantry. Possessing a cold heart and selfish character, he gave himself the credit of having many friends, for he was aware that one of the first means of obtaining importance in life, is found in knowing how to cultivate and preserve useful and brilliant connections. Although extremely circumscribed in point of intellectual acquirement, the Chevalier was thought a very clever man; having studied the pantomimical part of superior acquirements, he succeeded un-

commonly well in assuming their tone and manner: he listened with attention, and smiled at the proper time, taking care to observe an air of seriousness or gaiety as the occasion seemed to require, but, he never compromised his judgment, or he would regulate it by that of persons, who had the reputation of being extremely well informed; sometimes he would employ small talk and versatility, instead of reason and argument; at others, preserving a mysterious reserve, he abstained from replying, and artfully eluded all questions that might be put to him, without absolutely deciding on any thing. Such was the man who fascinated all hearts in that day, and with the rest, those of Seraphine. A knight of Malta, and restrained by his vows from marrying, he could not aspire to her hand, and therefore considered this conquest as the master-piece of his achievements; but he was ignorant, that in granting this triumph, the philosophical Seraraphine, was equally prepared to yield a second to another.

On the Chevalier's approaching Seraphine, and the Baron ,who were seated at the other extremity of the room, so as that their conversation could not be heard, she tenderly observed, here he is! allow me to introduce him to you.—On which the Baron bowed, and seizing the Chevalier's hand pressed it with all the warmth of a long intimacy.—The Chevalier, who was totally unprepared for the event, did not exactly comprehend upon what terms he was so *amicably* presented, and therefore felt a degree of embarrassment which was plainly betrayed in his countenance; but Seraphine, leaning towards him, whispered, I have told him every thing—at this d'Herbain appeared thunderstruck, for although he had passed his thirty-fifth year, and led a very irregular life, he had not as yet been made sufficiently acquainted with the *ingenuous* and sentimental depravity of premeditated corruption. He never read, or had he received any really useful instruction; but yielded to his passions without reflection or resis-

tance; on observing his confusion, the Baron said, you have no idea of her adorable candour; it is perfectly true, she has told me *every thing*;—adding, in a tone of affected emotion, let us love her, and be only rivals in emulation to render her happy! Seraphine, attentive to all that passed, expressed her *sensibility* in sentences which were broken by sighs; thus proving how greatly she was affected by the Baron's generosity. The Chevalier, who had not hitherto witnessed any examples of the nauseating folly arising from such factitious enthusiasm, was so struck by the ludicrousness of this scene, that he had great difficulty in being prevented from laughing; but accustomed to assume an air of calmness and reconciliation in all things, he was perfectly successful in playing the part of silent admiration, surprise, and astonishment on the present occasion.

The marriage took place eight days after, under the above auspices; and, according to their proposed plan, the

husband, wife, and lover, lived together on the best possible terms. To such a degree had their exultation in vice at length arrived, that Seraphine one day solemnly declared that she would not survive the *two objects* of her affection, vowing that poison would be her only resource, if she had the misfortune of becoming the widow of both. They were so affected at this proof of devotion, that in the event of her being the first to depart this life; they faithfully promised to immolate themselves on her tomb. These projects served to amuse and support the heroism of this singular association, although as you will readily suppose, neither of the parties were ever meant to realize them. From cherishing a little regard to existing *prejudices*, they did not however speak of this *triple alliance* in society; and yet, Seraphine seemed proud to show an adulterous attachment for the Chevalier, and which the epicureans of the day called an *interesting weakness*. Even many women of

gallantry maintained, but without believing it, that the connection was purely platonic.

The marriage of Seraphine had not taken place above three years, when the Chevalier was attacked by a consumption which carried him off in less than six months after; during the last days of his life, however, he took it into his head to reform, by which the Baron was inexpressibly mortified.

The Baroness affected a degree of sorrow, during d'Herbain's illness, which she was far from really feeling; and, together with her husband, paid all possible attention to him after he was given over by the physicians. One morning, when they went to the Chevalier's room she could not gain admittance, while her husband was however suffered to enter as usual; Seraphine attributed the cause of this refusal to her lover's being on the point of death, and wishing to spare her so melancholy a sight, she therefore retired shedding a torrent of tears.

On the Baron's being shown into d'Herbain's room, the latter's attendant withdrew leaving them alone. When he was about to open the conversation by explaining to his friend how greatly afflicted Seraphine was, the Chevalier interrupting him, said, I never believed either in her sentiments or your own, nor have I ever loved her, but was merely led astray by vanity, and a criminal curiosity; you have both proved to me that vice is more odious in its refinements, than its grossness, for in the former case, all is false and deceitful even to its excesses. You may now leave me, do not take the trouble of returning, and be assured, that the most besotted and ridiculous of all husbands, is a philosophical one.

At this moment, and while the Baron seemed bursting with mingled rage and astonishment, the door opened and he saw a venerable ecclesiastic enter; we all know that philosophers have an invincible antipathy to priests; it need not therefore excite any wonder if the Baron,

after having glanced his eyes full of scorn on this intruder, and only taken them off for the purpose of transferring a last look of hatred to the Chevalier, rushed out of the room and left them to their meditations. He did not think it prudent to relate what happened to Seraphine; for in spite of all his philosophy, he felt that the Chevalier's observations threw considerable ridicule on the *triple alliance*, and by his silence, the Baroness was satisfied that her lover's attachment had experienced no change, and that he died unalterably her own.

After d'Herbain's death Seraphine, from motives of decorum, retired for three weeks, to a country house of the Baron's, at Anteuil; the garden, attached to this residence, was laid out in the English style, and had been a favorite spot with the Chevalier; here, and in the honeysuckle bower, the Baroness caused a rustic tomb, without name or epitaph, to be raised, a tuft of everlasting, the symbol of fidelity, being merely planted on the

top: there was also a marble slab, half concealed by the foliage, on which the following mysterious inscription appeared. *In spite of Death.* To this sorrowful bower, Seraphine repaired nightly to indulge her grief by moonlight.

The Chevalier had not been more than fifteen days in his real grave, before the Baron was suddenly called into Picardy, on business of great importance. On leaving home, he told Seraphine, that there was no probability of his returning for nearly a month at least, but having, contrary to expectation, terminated the affair in less than forty-eight hours, he hastened back to Paris; this took place towards the end of August, and having arrived at his house late in the evening, the servants informed him their mistress was in the country, when he immediately set off for Anteuil. Not finding Seraphine in the house, he had no doubt that she was at the tomb of poor d'Herbain, particularly as the moon was now almost at its full, and shining with great splen-

dour. He went there accordingly, but as the rural cenotaph happened to be enclosed by a railing, and there being a door entrance, which was locked, he could not get in without having recourse to his own key, which he generally carried in his pocket; this done, and proceeding directly to the tomb, he was a little surprized to find the sentimental Seraphine *tête-à-tête*, with the dashing young Count de ***, and engaged in a most animated interview; they endeavoured to administer mutual consolation, at the tomb of her departed lover, and by the light of the moon!

Notwithstanding the Baron's unshaken principles of philosophy, he could not contemplate this scene without some trifling degree of anger: but they soon restored him to his wonted affability. The Count, who had been initiated into the Baron's family secrets, proposed a *new treaty*, which he must accept, if only to support his character, and prevent

the circulation of a story that could not fail to amuse all Paris at his expence.

It was thus that the early years of Seraphine's life were passed; while her husband, on his side, not only played enormously high, but always had an opera dancer under his protection. By this course of living, his health was ruined, fortune squandered, and reputation destroyed, till at length weighed down by all the shameful infirmities of a premature old age, produced by libertinism, he died a cripple at forty-four, without having ever reflected for one moment during the whole of his life, for as he had been early taught to believe that *the man who thinks is a depraved animal*,* he only wished to be considered as one in all its purity.

The Baroness was left with a very limited fortune, as nearly all her own had been dissipated; but she was young

* See Rousseau's Essay on the Origin, and Cause of Inequality amongst Men.

and beautiful, and determined, if only out of delicacy and conscience, to make no retrenchment either in her expences or habitual magnificence. A great philosopher* had told her, that a woman of gallantry, who gives employment to several tradesmen, is much more useful to the State, than a devotee who makes charitable donations, and liberates people from prison: all the other *sages* had inspired her with contempt and horror; for the words *mine* and *thine*, in contradiction to which, robbery was justified as the best means of restoring the natural order of society, compensating for the injustice of fate, and the tyranny of laws, as exemplified in certain celebrated memoirs, wherein one of the *friends of wisdom* is represented as having put it in practice, and being the *best of men*.† Seraphine did not however carry her philosophy quite so far, she had no par-

* Helvetius.

† Confessions of J. J. Rousseau.

tiality for violent means, while there was a possibility of gaining her point by the employment of more gentle remedies, she thought also, that till the *division of lands* was effected, every thing ought to be in common, between lovers at least.

A cousin German of my father-in-law, from whom I heard all the details, had been for a long time house-steward to the Baroness, and on her husband's death, immediately recommended a great reform in the expenditure, which ought, he said, to commence with selling the fine hotel which she then occupied. Never, Sir, she replied, this house is dear to me; a thousand recollections attach me to it; besides, were I to put it up for sale, the world would instantly conclude that the Baron had left his affairs in a bad condition, and if only from respect to his memory, I ought to conceal the fact; I shall therefore retain the house: but, Madam, rejoined the steward, that is impossible with your income.—Nothing is impossible to those, who, to sentiments of

duty join a firm determination to fulfil it.—Then, Madam, if you keep the house, you must reduce the number of servants three fourths at least.—What ? me discharge servants ? shall I turn people who have so faithfully served me and whose only dependence is on their places into the street? I shall not discharge one of them !—But, Madam, you have really not the means of paying or feeding so many It is true that the disposal of your diamonds would bring a large sum.—Make yourself easy on that subject, I shall not sell a single diamond ; they are the first pledges of the Baron's sentiments towards me : and I can never part with them.—Nevertheless, Madam I protest to you that even with the strictest economy, the expence of equipages, table, dress, &c. you will never be able to go on—What do you call *strict economy ?* when the prosperity of manufactures and commerce is concerned ! what a cold and callous heart that being must possess, whose soul does not start at the sacred

name of his *country*, or that does not exult in the glorious title of *Citizen*. I am only a woman, but my career on earth will not be totally destitute of *éclat*, and I can at least serve my country in one way.—Reflect, Madam, that you have not more than twenty-thousand livres a year, and that without getting deeply in debt, it is not possible for you to go on in this way.—Blondel, (for that was the old man's name), be assured that debts contracted from such motives as those I have mentioned, cannot be dishonorable. But do not give yourself any uneasiness, I know how to provide against every difficulty.

As the Baroness told her steward: out of mere greatness of soul towards her servants; love for her country; a desire to promote the interests of manufactures and commerce, and *respect for the memory of her late husband*: she provided for all the wants of the establishment, by selecting a farmer-general as her next lover, who paid liberally and was ruined

in four or five years after their intimacy had commenced. During the first part of this scandalous mode of life, a relative of the late Baron's, named Durval, going one morning to Seraphine's house, warmly expostulated with her, and amongst other remarks, he said that though the world was apt to excuse weaknesses which had not degenerated into crime, it never tolerated acts of meanness: and that nothing was more revolting in its estimation, than for a female to accept presents or money from her lover. The motives, principles, and sentiments can ennoble every thing, proudly answered the Baroness, I only receive to distribute, and am merely the depositary of the offerings which are made. The idle scruples of which you speak are the prejudice of slaves and vulgar souls, who attach an immense value to fortune; such false delicacies were invented by avarice; and this vile metal, gold, is only valuable to me, in proportion to the liberality of its application.

But the use you make of money, is to expend it in paying for boxes at the theatres, giving *fêtes*, and buying sumptuous dresses.—And the fine arts, which I patronize, the multitude of artisans and others to whom I afford the means of living; is all this to go for nothing?—Then it seems you think, that to riot in luxury, is benevolence.—Many eloquent philosophers of the present day, have proved it beyond a shadow of doubt: it is luxury alone that creates the prosperity of states.—*Manners* were formerly said to consitute it. "If, as an eloquent writer observes, luxury does not enrich one family till after it has ruined two; if it only circulates benefits in channels which are often useless and sometimes pernicious, till after others are dried up that are essential; if it gives to splendour and indolence, the substance of creditors, deprives children of a careful education, and the indigent of charitable aid; if it only encourages frivolous industry, at the expence of useful exertion, and

talents which are really brilliant, to smother those of a solid nature, if it only manifests an apparent *éclat*, to conceal real misery; or if the vanity of showing it, multiplies vices, follies, and crimes:"* you will at least allow, that it ought to have limits, and deserves to be checked in some degree.—I am fully aware of all these *hackneyed objections* to luxury, but they cannot seduce me.—Yet, history proves the truth of these very objections. It is excessive luxury that has in all ages caused the ruin of Empires!... Let us give up this discussion, adhere to your gothic opinions, but do not attempt to change mine.— I admit that those you profess are more convenient, and somewhat easier to follow. But when you have proved that excessive luxury is politically useful, by what sort of reasoning will you jutify women who receive payment for their favours?—What! shall I without hesitation ask my friend for his

* Anti-Philosophical Dict. vol. 2, page 18.

time ; to attend his eloquence and arm to defend me ; and yet blush to accept that which is a thousand times less precious ? —We are not speaking of a *friend*, but of a *lover*. Well ! a lover is always a friend. —Never when he pays ; and reflect Madam, that in thus conducting yourself, you are assimilated to the most abandoned courtesan.—Pardon me, sir, a courtesan acts without principles, whereas mine are of a very elevated description : dishonour in such cases depends rather on the routine, than the system : the one I pursue has been traced for me by the greatest men of the age ; they have told me, that there is *nothing honest or dishonest in itself ; that the passions are the real pilots of life*, and that, *what little minds call cynical is only the generous efforts of a sublime philosophy which relieves the wise from ridiculous prejudices** I shall not therefore be *assimilated* to vile cour-

* Philosophical Dict. and Letters on the Blind: by Didérot.

tisans, but to those charming women who were the delight of antient Greece, such as Leontium, Aspasia, &c., and to the celebrated Ninon de l'Enclos of our own age, so much praised and admired by Modern Philosophers. * —— I have only another word to say Madam; it is, that your late husband's family will not suffer you thus openly to dishonour one of the most respectable names at Court !—I understand you; a *lettre-de-cachet*† will be issued against me !—If you do not immediately change your mode of living, every thing may be expected.—I am glad you have mentioned this, for it is quite as well to know their intentions, and we shall soon see

* Amongst others by d'Alembert, who thought he could not terminate his Eulogium on Christina, Queen of Sweden, any better, than in saying that Ninon *was the only Woman in Paris*, whom that Princess *honored with a visit* !

† The warrant by which suspected persons were taken up and lodged in the Bastile or any other Prison, previous to the revolution.

which gets the better on this occasion, pedantry or genius.

Such was the end of the above conference, and no sooner had Durval left her, than ordering her carriage to the door, she flew to the minister who was charged with the issuing of *lettres-de-cachet;* this statesman was extremely partial to the sex, and Seraphine knew it, he therefore, as might be supposed found her charming, and having been closeted with him for two hours, these were employed by her in displaying what she called her *genius*, for the purpose of captivating him, in which she fully succeeded; the minister became a powerful protector, and the first pledge of his love, exacted by Seraphine, was a *lettre-de-cachet*, which consigned poor Durval himself to the Bastile on the following day, but he was only detained there forty-eight hours. The Baroness herself, having solicited *his pardon* and even wishing to be the bearer of it to him, in prison: she not only performed that office, but

conducted him in her carriage to his own house, near the Rue St. Honoré. Durval, who is an excellent man, and totally incapable of suspicion, had no conception whatever of the cause of his imprisonment, so that on going into the vehicle he very naturally began to express his surprize to Seraphine; and first asked, by what chance is it that you have come to liberate me! and can you tell why I was committed to the Bastile? How very inquisitive you are! she replied, smiling, surely you cannot be ignorant, that according to law, the prisoners sent to the Bastile, have no right to enquire the motives of their detention, and that a man may be kept thirty years there, without knowing why he was shut up, or that it frequently occurs the ministers themselves forget the reason, after a certain time has elapsed; but although your question is so indiscreet; I intend to gratify you in the present case, by answering it. Know then, that you were put into the Bastile, be-

cause some one denounced you as the author of the satirical couplets, which are in circulation.—What! the verses against the King and his Ministers?—Precisely!—What an unheard of calumny! why I never wrote a line of poetry in the whole course of my life.—That is no matter; the person who gave the information was believed, or had interest at court, and nothing more was necessary..—And the King, from whom I receive a pension, could be made to believe it?—Tut man! what has the King to do with trifles like these; are you not aware that people are shut up, and arrested in every direction without his knowing a particle about the matter; it is true our family is so well known, that your imprisonment could not be long concealed, but rest assured that the minister would have, in three words, persuaded the King, that you are ungrateful, disaffected, and a libeller;—Yet the King has not a more faithful subject; and as to the couplets, I have had nothing whatever to do with

them.—At these words, the Baroness bursting into a loud laugh, said, then if that is the case, I must take you back from whence we came.—How?—If you must know, the couplets in question were composed in my own house, and it was I who wrote that which relates to the minister.—Is it possible! and you dare avow it!—I do, and run no risk either, for if you told it to him, not a word would he believe. I have anticipated you, it is me to whom you are indebted for your incarceration.—You?—The very person, but with the project of not suffering you to remain confined more than forty-eight hours; you came to threaten me with a *lettre-de-cachet*, and I had you put in the very same night in my stead; you will allow that the trick was laughable enough.—So it might, but I hope to be excused from joining in the laugh against myself; and can it be really true, Madam, that the disciple of philosophers, who are so fond of liberty, finds any pleasure in putting people into

prison !—I like my philosophers, because their principles are never absolute, by which they controul in nothing, while their morality adopts itself to every situation. For example; the one whom I chiefly look up to is Voltaire; has he not ardently solicited *lettres-de-cachet*, to imprison la Baumelle, Freron, &c,* I could therefore venture upon this frolic, without doing any violence to philosophy, and it should teach you, that people ought to renounce every idea of frightening me by menaces.—I perceive, Madam, that nothing will be capable of stopping your progress, which though it may not lead to your *elevation*, will doubtless carry you quite far enough.

The Baroness was by no means hurt at this reflection of Durval's, the only thing that tended to irritate her, was opposing her plans, attacking her beauty, or denying her charms and success.—It was no longer possible to wound the

* See his Letters,

honour of Seraphine, the only pride remaining with her, was that of coquetry and depravity; her family, justly indignant, soon ceased to receive her, and she was then discarded from society, every door being irrevocably shut against her. As she kept up a large establishment, was witty and agreeable, there was no difficulty in attracting many persons of talent, and some individuals of the Court to her house; so that, by this means, she contrived to form a very genteel circle, particularly as it regarded the men.

Eight months before my marriage, Sophie's father, struck with my constancy and correctness, began to give me hopes, having previously, and without my knowledge, proved my fidelity in various ways; the last trial he reserved for me, was gone through, before I had the least suspicion of the snare that had been laid: while soliciting a place, a stranger suddenly took a great interest in my concerns, because I had written a farce for one of the principal theatres, which hap-

pened to be favourably received. He proposed introducing me to the Baroness de Blimont, who was, he said, passionately fond of literature, and from having great influence, she would certainly get what I wanted. I was at this time totally unacquainted with any thing but her name, and of course felt quite flattered at the idea of being admitted into the society of one who frequented the court; I therefore lost no time in accompanying my new friend to her house; she received me with the utmost civility, asked for a memorandum of the place I solicited, for she had been apprized of my application, and it was accordingly forwarded the next day, together with a short copy of verses, composed in her praise, and which I have no doubt, made her laugh heartily, as I panegyrized her *virtue*, as highly as her generosity: she sent me a most flattering note of thanks, inviting me to her house the next evening. During the interval which preceded the hour of going to Seraphine's, I spoke to three or four friends, on the subject of my

recent introduction, and, to my great astonishment, heard that the woman for whom I entertained so much respect and veneration, had become a genuine courtesan, no less from inclination than principles. This discovery excited some melancholy reflections in my mind, for nothing could be more mean in my estimation, than the alternative of yielding to the advances of such a woman, from motives of interest; and the consequence was, that from this moment, I formed the resolution of conducting myself in a way that would shelter me from every suspicion of the above kind. I went to Seraphine's, on the following evening, at eight o'clock; but how much had her superb hotel, which dazzled me so greatly during the first visit, fallen in my eyes! all that I had before admired, as the symbols of grandeur and dignity, now served only to inspire me with profound contempt, its magnificence was now converted into the disgusting emblems of dissipation and ignominy. On

entering, I was led through a long suite of apartments, and at length reached an elegant cabinet, covered by pier glasses, richly perfumed, full of flowers, and agreeably lighted up with wax candles, enclosed in alebaster vases.... These common-place allurements of seduction, only served to heighten my indignation. I found the Baroness alone, and seated on a sofa; she begged me to sit down by her side, to which I acceded in silence; her attitude, general deportment, style of dress and expression of countenance, were equally repulsive to my feelings; nevertheless, I did not wish to appear either awkward, or embarrassed, and did not want her to take my principles for rudeness, folly, or simplicity. Besides, where is the young man, who can strip himself of all self-love, when tempted by the most contemptible of women if she is but beautiful and attractive?—The various thoughts that agitated me, created an emotion, which the Baroness interpreted in a totally different

sense, to what it really indicated. She smiled, immediately adding that my business went on swimmingly, and I might calculate on a prompt termination of it. I have done myself the honour of waiting on you, Madam, first in obedience to your polite invitation, and in the next place to inform you, that an unexpected event having entirely changed my situation, the place in question will no longer suit my views; you will therefore oblige me, by not taking any more trouble on the subject; I added several other acknowledgments expressive of my gratitude, for the kindness I had experienced. Her surprize was extreme, and as I expected, she immediately began to ask a thousand questions, when I took advantage of it, to show her what my real sentiments were, without naming any one, or entering into the detail of this pretended change of circumstances: I told her that it arose from a marriage I was negociating. *A marriage!* she replied, and one I suppose which will

make your fortune?—It will do more, Madam, it will insure my happiness.—Then you are in love?—Desperately, it is a first attachment, and will certainly be the last; people do not love twice in this way.—Do you think not?—I am sure of it.—And without occasional aberations?—There can be none, Madam, where we truly love.—I was satisfied that after the above declaration, Seraphine would only think of putting an end to the conference and politely dismiss me; but I was mistaken. I had roused her vanity, and she thought it a fine thing to shake the fidelity of one who could have thus, in a *tête-à-tête*, had the *impertinence* to make such an avowal. She took great care not to betray anger on the occasion, but offered to render me all the services she could in other respects, conjuring me to return again that very night, and with a view of detaining me, begged that I would relate the story of my attachment to Sophie. She vainly employed all the varied arts of mildness,

vivacity and persuasion to seduce me; excusing myself in a respectful but frigid tone, I took my leave at nine o'clock, determined never to renew the visit. Two days after I received a note from Sophie, containing the following words:

"I write, under the eyes of my father, to request you will come to our house immediately, as he wishes to tell you that there is no longer any obstacle to your happiness or that of

"SOPHIE."

You can easily judge of my feelings on perusing the above!—The summons was instantly obeyed, and on arriving at the house, her father embracing me, affectionately, cried, Sophie is yours!——No sooner had the first transports occasioned by this confirmation of my felicity subsided, than I learnt that my conduct with the Baroness had been closely watched. I did not know Blondel, the old steward, as my visits to Sophie were greatly restricted, and he from constant occupation seldom went out, so that I

never met with him at my father-in-law's, I was thus totally ignorant of his connection with the Baroness, over whom he had no direct authority, but whose confidence he enjoyed on those matters of business which he transacted for her out of mere gratitude to the family, from which his fortune had been derived. It was Blondel therefore, whom Seraphine had charged to solicit the place I applied for, and without imagining that he would feel the least interest about me, on the following day she informed him that as I no longer wanted the situation, he must ask it for some one else whose name she gave him; during the interview she affected to speak of me in terms of great contempt and dissatisfaction; which circumstance succeeding, so immediately after the anxiety she manifested on the previous day, coupled with my refusal to accept the place, readily enabled him to divine what had passed between us. He then went to Sophie's father and

having related every thing, the latter instantly decided on giving me his daughter.

Although our marriage contract was drawn up the same day, the ceremony did not take place for some little time after, owing to the absence of Sophie's uncle who wished to be present at the wedding. Our relatives being invited, to witness the signature of the settlement they assembled according to custom, at the house of the future bride's father, Blondel came last, and instead of entering the drawing room where we were all seated, he called myself and father-in-law into an adjoining cabinet, and advancing towards me, said, I have brought you a little wedding present; an appointment of four thousand francs per annum, procured in the following manner:—the Baroness, as I have already informed you, desired that I would apply for another to supply your place, to which no attention was paid, and I this morning received

your nomination in due form, from the public office in which it has originated. I then went to the Baroness and making her believe that your future father-in-law heard of it before me, and I therefore came to say he had forced your acceptance of the situation in question, that you had done so, and he was that moment going to return the thanks usual on such occasions, and moreover that you would wait upon herself this evening to repeat your own acknowledgments of gratitude. This piece of news has put the Baroness a good deal out of humour; but, as there is no remedying her disappointment, she has determined to take it all in good part, and will therefore receive you with the best possible grace. Appear as if you had totally forgotten the *tête-à-tête*, and since her first recommendation has led to your getting a good appointment, it will be as well to pay your respects occasionally at her house. Sophie will not be jealous. The firmness of your

late conduct and delicacy of your sentiments should for ever banish all inquietude between you.

I did not fail to attend at Seraphine's in the evening, she received me without the smallest embarrassment, which will account to you for my keeping up the acquaintance, by going there at long intervals; it is merely an effort of politeness that requires no particuler sacrifice, and the Baroness no longer dreams of making a convert of me. She is besides excessively agreeable, and the society I meet in her house is both witty and entertaining.

CHAPTER X.

Courageous resolution of Julien.—He quarrels with Matilda. Singular malady of the Marchioness d'Inglar.

DURAND's narrative proved to me that the Baroness had concealed her age from Matilda, and that she must be at least thirty-two if not more; but still, added I, she is not the less dangerous, for, after all, it must be allowed she is exceedingly fascinating. Yes, replied my friend, but a sure preservative against her charms, is furnished by the depravity of her conduct, equally devoid of scruples and destitute of remorse.—Yes, said I, but she is so elegant, looks so tenderly, and has such white hands!—Here Durand smiled, observing, I will lay a wager Adeline's must be rather red, for this is not the first time I have heard you speak of Seraphine's—Hear me, Julien, continued he, if you do not take great care,

this woman will do you very serious injury.—I promise you that her interest shall never be exerted for me.——No matter, it will be said that you receive money from her, and it is highly disgraceful to be the *favourite* of a kept woman, do not therefore repeat your visits.—Under what pretext can I break off the acquaintance so very abruptly? Nothing is abrupt to such women, except in appearance, and contending the point; this you will avoid by ceasing to visit her, and at the end of eight or ten days, believe me, she will think no more about you.—And yet, she has often said I was *a very fine lad.*—That is doubtless rather seducing, but I venture to predict that she would say the same of every one else; at all events consult your friend the Count d'Inglar.——Do you think he will advise me not to see her again?—Yes, and insist on it also.——Then if that be your opinion, I will no longer conceal from my dear Durand that I heartily detest the conduct we have been commenting on,

and that I could never feel any attachment to such a woman. Yet, she is not an ordinary courtesan, and it must be a curious thing to see how with her education, rank, and talent, she would conduct this intrigue.—Restrain your curiosity in such matters; it has ruined more young people than even love itself, besides you have seen all that is really *curious* in the character of this woman, you have had an ample opportunity of observing that which distinguishes her from others of a similar description; her address, manners, and method of doing the honors of her house are all familiar to you; if admitted to a more intimate footing, what could you expect to see but the little tricks and artifices of a professed woman of gallantry, in this point of view, effrontery, and vice, render her a match for the most notorious,—Well, my friend, I then said, if you really think I ought to give up this connection, I promise never to cross her threshold again.—At these words, Durand threw himself on my

neck, and embraced me with the most inexpressible joy, at the victory he had gained; while, on my part, I felt that in following virtuous counsel, it is impossible not to feel a kind of enthusiastic regard for those who give it. From this moment my friendship towards him was quite as strong, as the one I entertained for Eusebius. My whole life has, in fact, passed between those two objects of my first affections; with such kind supporters, it is easy to sustain the reverses of fortune, and avoid the dangers which sourround us in this world.

In the mean time, Matilda to whom I had confided the fact of my first success with the Baroness, did not for a moment lose sight of her vengeance, or fail to press my declaration of love. But she was confounded when I communicated my unalterable resolution not to return there any more. In her anger she attributed my defection to cowardice, and a fear of Count Joseph's resentment. 'No, Madam, I coldly replied, and as you

well know, I disdained his favour when proffered by yourself. But I despise all women who are without virtue, and never see such, except when it cannot be avoided; I then left her to indulge in all the bitterness of rage and disappointment.

The Viscount d'Inglar was now in England, and not expected to return for another month, but we were informed by Mademoiselle de Versec, that his mother, the Marchioness, complained very much of her health; a circumstance that became a source of great uneasiness, for she had till then encouraged a totally different pretention deriving considerable vanity from the strength of her constitution. However, her physician who also attended on my uncle, made us easy on the subject, for having begged to know the nature of her illness I received the following answer.—She is no more ill than you or me.—I understand, said I, she labours under an imaginary disease? —By no means.—Then she feigns sick-

ness?—No, she is perfectly in earnest.—How can that be?—Aye! that is very difficult to explain; and yet this state, so common amongst women, is a dangerous epoch in their lives, because physicians have not as yet properly considered it; and owing to want of knowledge, on the subject, they prescribe very improper remedies. The Marchioness d'Inglar is at that time of life when, without having entered into old age, the total loss of youth passed in the tumult of dissipation, diminished strength, altered features and the lassitude arising from fashionable amusements, announces to persons who possess the best constitutions, that the mode of living they have hitherto led, is no longer suited to them. In general, women do not give up the idea of being young until the age of fifty, and why? because it is at this period an inevitable crisis, a revolution of nature, destroys all farther illusion in that respect. The Marchioness is only forty-one; she calculates on having nearly ten

years more of youthful days, and will not reduce that time a single day. If I reasoned with her on such a weakness, I should shock without convincing her.—The Marquis wished to give her a few hints on this delicate subject; but she affected not to understand them, and was rather offended; no one dare oppose her, yet, she complains bitterly of the insensibility of all those by whom she is surrounded; she persecutes me to administer medicine, which I have determined not to do; she then repeats, that we are going to let her die without affording succour; the end of all which, will doubtless be, that she will put herself into the hands of some quack, whose *marvellous elixirs* cannot fail to produce the very *natural consequence* of transferring her to the other world!

We represented to the doctor, that as he would be responsible for such an event, it was therefore much better to indulge her mania, by satisfying it, in administering *harmless doses* and pills

made of bread, as the celebrated Tronchin had often done to cure the imaginary diseases of his patients. The doctor answered, that here, the case was very different, because the Marchioness would not think herself cured except by regaining exhausted powers, colours irretrievably tarnished, or in ceasing to be satiated with amusements, that her ignorance and inveterate habits, prevented all possibility of replacing by useful occupation.

Nothing could be more deplorable than the above state of mind, particularly for a person who, like the Marchioness, was unhappily devoid of mental resources and sensibility, the melancholy result of a defective education, and youth ridiculously prolonged in the unprofitable idleness of vain dissipation; yet, she was far from feeling the real misery of her situation. It is true she had never been handsome or coquettish, nor did she deplore the loss of beauty, or a crowd of adorers; she could only regret the bustle and gaiety of *fêtes*, and no less

insipid amusements of the world; this was, however, quite enough to plunge her into that profound *ennui* which often leads to consumption!.....I had frequently called at her house, since the absence of Eusebius, without being ever able to see the Marchioness; but, having received a letter from him in which I was charged with the execution of several little commissions, when completed, I carried the packet containing them to his mother, for the purpose of being forwarded to London. This led to my being admitted into her presence; she was laying on a couch, accompanied by Mademoiselle de Versec and young Edelie, who had been brought home from the Convent, to be married to Count Joseph, in the course of two months; some time had now elapsed since I had found it impossible to meet Edelie, without considerable emotion. She recalled the happiest days of infancy, and resembled her brother, for whom I had so great a regard; she also treated me

with the tender familiarity of innocence; but above all, she was beautiful!.... The Marchioness made me sit down close to her couch, and with a look of great languor observed, why, Julien, it is an age since we have seen you; I am sure you must find me greatly altered?—Not in the least madam, I replied. There is no use in flattering me on that subject, rejoined the Marchioness, I had such a fine colour before, that I never thought of applying any rouge; but now, I am as pale as a spectre; nay, there is a yellow hue spread over my countenance; my eyes feel heavy; I have grown thin, and am in fact falling away so rapidly, that it is wonderful others cannot see it as well as myself. There is no doubt, gravely observed Mademoiselle de Versec, but that the Marchioness is changed; yet, she has naturally so strong a constitution that.... Yes, my dear, interrupted the Marchioness, but recollect that my disease is an inveterate one; and you must also remember that it is now three

years since I observed the first symptoms. —Very true, Madam.—My complaint has come on slowly and by degrees, as all those which arise from debility do; at first, I did not pay much attention to it, but its progress became so alarming, that there is no deceiving oneself any longer, at these words she sighed deeply.—Edelie who held one of her hands, kissed it, and then said in a most ingenuous tone, do not despair, my dear mamma, you will soon be well again. The doctor has given me his word that there is not the smallest danger in your complaint, and he is extremely clever.—So he is, replied the Marchioness, in all violent maladies, but he has no skill whatever in those of a chronic nature, and while he maintains that I have no real illness, I can easily see that he thinks my disease incurable; besides, he has hinted, that I shall never regain my former plumpness, or complexion; he has even given me to understand that this is merely the commencement of a species of decline

which will go on, so that I may expect something still worse; if I ask for a remedy, he orders me lime tea, orange-flower water, and hip-baths. It is totally impossible to cure so threatening a disease with such nostrums.——Here I interrupted the Marchioness, for the purpose of inquiring in what her sufferings consisted. I have no ague, said she, and cannot say that I suffer at all physically.—As yet I have neither lost my sleep or appetite; I do not think there is any part in particular affected, but it is the whole system which decays; you know how physical disability influences the moral attributes. I suffer most cruelly in this respect, for I enjoy nothing; every exertion fatigues and wearies me..... What! Madam, cried I, even to the *fêtes?*——Ah! Julien, there are no more *fêtes* for me; the noise stupifies me; music makes me sad; I am tired of the theatres, and I have no longer strength enough to keep late hours.....If you were to find out some occupation, Madam,

.....Oh! that's all very well for those who have been accustomed to study; but reading disagrees with my eyes and gives me the head-ache: as to needle-work, I never could bear it, tapestry and embroidering are wretched and insipid pastimes!——But there are so many others, for instance, a taste for botany, and cultivating flowers.....So there are, Julien, and I was once passionately fond of flowers, they used to charm me in garlands and vases; but I cannot bear them now, odours of every kind make me quite nervous.

As the Marchioness had concluded the above sentence, the door opened; and Count Joseph made his appearance. I rose for the purpose of retiring, but she detained me, observing, Edelie's *intended* ought not to make me fly, and that she was sure he would be very glad to see me. I remained, therefore, but with a palpitating heart, which increased at every step the Count made towards Edelie. I trembled for the fate of this innocent vic-

tim about to be immolated at the shrine of vanity: for the Marchioness only persevered in giving her to one of the worst characters at court, in order to see her occupy the place of lady in waiting, which the future mother-in-law promised to cede when the marriage was solemnized, and because the Count succeeded to a Dukedom.—How truly odious are prejudices, which like the above at once offend the heart and reasoning powers!

Count Joseph was extremely affable to me on this occasion, probably because he saw me well received by the Marchioness; I had witnessed his conduct with regard to the Baroness, and as only a part of his follies were as yet known to the d'Inglar family, he naturally wished to prevent me from detailing them either to Mademoiselle de Versec, or the Viscount, who was expected back every day, to attend the wedding. The great, of those days, all imagined they could convince and silence the inferior classes of society, by a few phrases, which were in

their estimation possessed of magical influence, and which like so many others of a different description, certainly produced a wonderful effect on a great majority of the vulgar and uneducated. When my destiny is fixed, said the Count, addressing himself to me, according to my wishes, we shall go and pass a month at Velmas, (one of his father's country houses,) you most come with us, my father and mother are aware of our early intimacy, and will be delighted to see you there. Mademoiselle d'Inglar will do the honours of the house with her accustomed grace, and somewhat less roguishly than at Etioles; for I recollect, while there, Mademoiselle de Versec, with all her prudence, had trouble enough to keep the peace between you. This eulogy on the prudence of Mademoiselle de Versec, put her in such a good humour, that she proceeded to relate many of Edelie's youthful frolics; when the latter, turning to me, expatiated on several of them herself, particularly on the scoldings we got for angling in

the garden bason, where her mother kept the gold and silver fish. At Velmas, said the Count, still addressing his conversation to me, you will have ample means of gratifying your taste for fishing, there being some admirable streams in the neighbourhood. It is a very fine estate said the Marchioness; yes, rejoined Count Joseph, in a solemn tone, and one which enjoys more seigneurial rights than any other in France: in fact, continued he, and assuming his former air of kindness and gaiety, Mr. Delmour, you are condemned to quit the delights of Paris, for the solitude of Velmas. Oh yes, indeed! added Edelie, you must come, Mr. Delmour. We shall often be reminded of old times.—Aye! said the Marchioness, they were also the good times; I was always in such rude health in those days, Julien!—— I might, like many others, have been intoxicated by all this flattering affability; but a vague and secret sentiment prevented the possibility of my yielding to its effects.

I could not help disliking the Count, for his vanity, pride, and dissolute manners, and still less because he was to marry Edelie: firmly determined on not going to Velmas, I thanked him in terms of great respect for his friendly invitation; and without entering into farther explanatins I, took my leave of the party.—I returned home in a very dejected mood, followed by the image of Edelie, which had often been present to my mind, but never until then caused similar agitation. It was in vain to hope for consolation at my uncle's, and I dare not confide such a ridiculous feeling to my friends, not even to Durand.

Although I was perfectly acquainted with Matilda's character, in many respects, she always excited my astonishment in the little details of life. There is a certain finesse in all women of address, which men never possess, and it is just that nature should have accorded this privilege to the weakest sex, which is necessarily in a state of continual dependence. The

most sincere amongst women, is only so from purity of heart, and because she despises artifice, but when endowed with sense, the latter quality is innate, and if disposed, she can employ it as successfully as the most deceitful. If on the other hand she wishes to make an innocent or benevolent use of this attribute, it will soon be proved that no man however ingenious can equal her in the powerful arts of contrivance and insinuation.

Thus it is that a woman, only, is enabled thoroughly to know and describe her own sex: yet, women, more susceptible than us, are also much more apt to be led away by their affections; but when indifferent, they possess the talent for observing society in a supreme degree; in that case nothing which relates to manners, customs, and characters, escape them. We only perceive the most glaring colours in objects, whereas they can distinguish all the shades.

I merely knew Matilda's character as a whole, nor was it possible for me to cal-

culate the subtilty of her schemes, which I never could divine, except by their consequences. After what had happend, I naturally expected she would manifest the greatest coldness, and even apparent dislike towards me in future; but I was not a little surprized to find her, even when we were alone, more friendly and animated than ever, without however my being able to see through the motive of this conduct, I was convinced there must be one in existence: and shocked as I felt, at her deception, it was impossible sometimes to avoid answering her ill-naturedly, and occasionally even in a tone of angry impatience; this was precisely what she not only wished, but foresaw. She told me that it was her intention to apply more closely than ever to cameo drawing, which was tantamount to saying that she wanted me to prepare a great many new designs. Her real plan being to lay in a good stock for the time to come: she plainly saw that I would no longer proceed in such a task, with

the same disinterested zeal that marked my former exertions, and therefore determined to make me a handsome present for each vignette, this was in fact to pay for my trouble. So that I merely followed up a part of my profession in executing the order, by preparing about twenty designs, not in my best style, for they were to pass for Matilda's drawing, but correctly done, and tolerably well coloured, this is all we owe to people who are capable of having recourse to similar expedients: usurpers in this way never make any real conquests, for although the inferior agent may sacrifice a little time to them, they never succeed in putting all his talents into requisition.

In the mean time I soon began to perceive how much my popularity and influence had diminished in the house. Mademoiselle Agatha, Matilda's waiting maid, and whose name has already appeared in this history, became much less attentive; the chocolate for my breakfast was served up thinner than usual,

and of a different quality, nor was it ever ready at the hour I ordered; the attendants in the shop no longer obeyed me; even my uncle got cooler every day, and became more severe, and by his continual reproaches I at last found out that false reports were incessantly made to him on my conduct. This art of poisoning the master's mind, by relating the petty disputes that occur in his family, has been carried to the utmost perfection amongst tradesmen, and indeed throughout all the middling class of society; any wife who is seconded in such a project by her servants, and who happens to be loved by the husband, is always sure to succeed in making him imbibe her own prejudices or hatred towards the objects of her resentment.—People in the great world have no idea of the power exercised in a lower sphere by the gossipping and tale-bearing of servants. Or of the art with which a cunning wife makes use of it, though appearing all the time to preserve an air of sweetness and good

nature. The husband, weary of business, and deprived of these inexhaustible topics furnished by the dissipation and frivolity of fashionable life, cheerfully adopts this sort of conversation. It becomes a habit, the evenings are passed by it; he listens, believes in all, without inquiring into any thing. Malevolence and hatred are mistaken for the effect of friendly confidence, and the grossest calumnies are considered as authenticated fact.—It was in the above manner, without open quarrels, or explanations, that Matilda succeeded in destroying me in the eyes of my uncle; when, therefore, I had completed the stipulated number of drawings, she made my uncle send for me one morning, and on obeying the summons, I found her in the room with him. Having in a tone of great coldness told me to sit down, and remaind silent for a few moments,—with a look full of anger, he observed, Julien, it is high time that this should have an end.—What! I demanded with astonishment. Julien, added

Matilda, in a most sentimental tone, I have told him the whole....This expression quite took me by surprize, and without taking time to reflect, it immediately occurred to me that she had confessed her intrigue with Count Joseph, so that I could not conceive why my uncle's anger should fall on me. You are no doubt astonished enough, said he, and can, I dare say, scarcely believe in such an act of candour.—I am certainly very much surprized.—I believe it, and I am not the less so at your conduct.—At what conduct, uncle? Your intrigue with Mademoiselle Adeline; my wife was generous enough to conceal it..... Julien, interrupted Matilda, I hope you do not mean to deny it.—No, Madam, replied I, but why did you defer a disclosure until it no longer exists?..... Silence, cried my uncle; it is carrying your impertinence too far, to reproach her whose feet you ought to kiss on the occasion...Do not make yourself angry, my dear, I beg of you; let me speak to

him. Julien, continued she, your excellent uncle has been very much irritated by your general conduct and rudeness towards me lately; he attributes them to the worst motives, those of self-interest, which has induced you to take a dislike to the wife who forms his happiness: I wished to remove this idea, and told him what I thought, that your aversion arose from my being acquainted with this intrigue, that I gave you some advice, and from that moment have only appeared in the light of a mentor who was in your way.... Yes, added my uncle, it is very true my dear Mätilda, notwithstanding your angelic sweetness, I have not the least doubt that your virtue and penetration have become odious to him, he has his own reasons for fearing them. Be assured also that he detests you, because you are my wife; as all the unworthy remarks he has made sufficiently proves .... Me! make remarks! rejoined I.— You did not say that every thing went on better in the house before my mar-

riage? that I was an ignoramus, and that I should be completely at a loss when you left me? that I drew ornaments in a gothic taste? that there was nothing *saleable* in the shop, but what had been made by yourself? or that you ordered? that the *trade* of a jeweller was beneath you? that the Inglar's only patronized me on your account? that I had promised you all my fortune? that nothing could be more ridiculous than my marrying a young wife? that she might do as she pleased, but you could never like her? that all the world laughs at me, and that if you thought proper, it depended on you to cut off all my connections: without mentioning the mean impertinences you made use of to the customers, relative to my style of living, and about our visitors: am I well informed or am I not!

I listened patiently to the above, without attempting to interrupt him, merely wishing to see how far this tissue of absurdities would be carried. It was certainly true that I had heard the railleries

of Matilda, concerning our acquaintances, laughed at them, and even added a few of my own to please her; but this was always when we were alone, all the rest was perfectly false. I asked my uncle who had made those calumnious reports. Stop, said he, the word *calumny* in this case, and made use of by you, is one in itself, don't go quite so far, you cannot deny positive facts, such as your irregular manners; the unbounded indulgence of my wife, her goodness and generosity, towards you; her patience in supporting your various rebuffs and insults. It is useless to deny remarks and conversations that are perfectly in unison with your general conduct ever since my marriage. Let this teach you that when inclined to observe what is going on, I am not to be deceived. I have a little too much experience to let myself be imposed on; I never judge without reflecting, and from what I have seen,.. Yes, said Matilda, he has a quick eye; I do not think there is a more penetrating one in Paris. This

compliment charmed the old man. From your being so young, my darling rejoined, he, you will soon find that your candour and excessive goodness is often apt to be blinded ; finally, he continued, I repeat to you, Julien, that all this must be put an end to. I should have broke out long since, if my wife had not prevented me. You like other people's bread better than mine: and as you told me that the Viscount d'Inglar, your *powerful* protector, would at his marriage, take you in the quality of secretary ; but all the marriages of this family are so put off from day to day, that heaven only knows when they are likely to take place, my proposition is, that you proceed to London, in search of the Viscount, if he should happen to care nothing about your fate, you may find work in the shop of my correspondent there Mr. Seamer for whom I'll give you a letter of recommendation which will ensure a good reception. As to the pension of a thousaud francs a year that I have settled on you, it shall continue to be regularly paid. So

that what with this and your earnings you'll be able to do very well. But do not any longer deceive yourself with the idea which your pride has given you of your own talents. You have a tolerable notion of ornamental drawing, when you do not fall into the fantastic and ridiculous, by the way of finding out something new; but you are by no means my best scholar in this way either. As to your cameos they are neat and pretty; yet, without prejudice, those of Matilda though less highly finished, produce much greater effect, and her figures have more expression. I was ten years teaching you, whereas she has only required six months of your instruction, which has been amply paid for, by the numerous presents you have received. Let me advise you to be, if possible, more prudent, wise, and grateful for the future. Uncle, I at length replied, I do not by any means think myself possesed of superior talents, but I am young enough to

acquire them, and I have a sufficient share, thanks to your kindness, henceforth, to gain an honest livelihood by my industry, so that I do not stand in the least need of the pension you offer. I should have accepted it most joyfully, had I continued to enjoy your friendship, but cannot think of receiving any pecuniary allowance while in disgrace.... I can only consider this refusal, interrupted my uncle, as an additional insult. Far from it, Sir! It is the result of that education for which I am indebted to yourself. When do you wish me to depart? To-morrow! At this reply my heart failed me, and making a low bow I retired. When half through the anti-chamber, I heard foot steps coming after me, they were those of my uncle, who on my stopping, said, although I told you that you might go to-morrow, it is not to be considered as an order. But merely signifies that from this moment, I have no longer any employment for you;

let it, however, be clearly understood, that you are at liberty to remain some days. It will be time enough to go in eight.. ten.... fifteen or more if you like..... after having pronounced these words, in a tone that softened the more he looked at me, for I could not help shedding tears, he hurried out of the room, doubtless to conceal his own emotion.

On returning to my chamber, I gave full vent to my tears; I loved my uncle who had many excellent qualities, and who was also my benefactor. I could not bear the idea of seperating from him on bad terms, even by my own wish, and with his consent. But to be driven out of his house !..... Alas ! I cried, during my infancy, I was banished from the paternal roof, and the same thing occurs in my eighteenth year, from that of an uncle and benefactor, without having in either case merited such treatment ! who

can say that I shall be more fortunate amongst strangers.....These sorrowful reflexions were followed by a torrent of tears, nor could I help feeling truly indignant at the audacious and profoundly deceitful woman who had thus blackened me in the eyes of my uncle....As may be easily conceived, I was both shocked and irritated by such unheard of malice and effrontery.

Without possessing equal address and talent to the Baroness de Blimont, there was not quite so much meanness in Matilda's character; but she infinitely surpassed the former in boldness, cunning, and hypocricy. Both entertained the same ideas and sentiments, in reality; the one more proud and ambitious, did not show these attributes except with caution and foresight; the other having from certain axioms, established by her reading, drawn inferences which went to convert every vice into virtue, justified herself on philosophical *principles* which she

thought sublime, proudly manifested a degree of boldness, the most impudent; I was the more afflicted, on this occasion, from having neither the hope or desire of justifying myself, to my uncle, since I could not succeed in doing so, even on the supposition of his believing my assertions, except by exposing Matilda; that is to say, making him the unhappiest of men and in playing the vilest of all parts, that of an informer. I therefore made up my mind to say nothing, but suffer in silence, and only direct my attention to the speediest means of quitting an asylum hitherto so dear to me, and in which the last years of infancy and first of my youth had been so happily passed.

CHAP. XI.

Separation of Julien and his Uncle.—He is presented to some new personages.—Departs for Switzerland.

The first person to whom I communicated the result of the foregoing interview was my friend Durand, to whom I gave a minute account of all that had happened. After having listened attentively to the whole; my friend, said he, I have just hit upon what will suit you. I need not tell you my father-in-law has retired from business, or that he is now reposing under his laurels, that is to say, his strong box and sixty thousand livres a year. I have been substituted by him in a number of concerns, and as I am going through a course of legal study, which to say the truth, in many cases only serves to enable the individual to boast of that honour, (a very useful

thing in an age of quackery,) he has advised me to occupy myself with the care of re-establishing the affairs of great men, who have ruined themselves, a profession now very common, and in which business is never wanting. Formerly they used to keep agents, but now nearly the whole have managers, and retain a *professional man*, not because the gentleman is acquainted with the *laws*, but because he lends them money so long as the estates are sufficient to pay the principal and interest of the loans thus made, and which interest is in proportion to the great man's wants on the one side, and the *professional man's* rapacity on the other. This mode of arrangement is extremely convenient for the indolent who, anxious to give up all their time to pleasure, wish to be entirely relieved from the *bore* of receiving, *paying*, regulating their accounts, or superintending their expenditure. If a young man of rank and property, confides in a rogue, he is sure to gain

time by it, as all his troubles and annoyances will then be terminated in the course of three or four years, for complete ruin is generally effected in that period. Should he by any chance find out an honest man, to transact his business, and closely adheres to the advice given him by the latter, his creditors will be paid from just and necessary reductions, an advantage that he will be obliged to pay with a heavy interest, accumulated by sums previously advanced. Thus, in five or six years he will be set free, though with a considerable diminution of fortune, but if experience has not improved him, and he does not determine to place an exact equilibrium between his receipt and expense; and to perform those duties himself, by devoting an hour each day to them, of that valuable time which he never employed in any thing but useless visits of ceremony, at theatres and gambling houses, his ruin, though retarded will be inevitable. But why, I asked my friend, do you say

that an honest man would require five or six years to arrange the affairs which are entrusted to him? To me, it appears they might be settled much sooner.—No doubt they would, if he had but *one customer*, but when it is necessary to act for several at the same time, delays naturally arise.—And, during all this time, replied I laughing, the amount of compound interest goes on increasing; yes, answered Durand, in a similar tone, and I assure you that in business, this idea, while the money is certain, has in many instances, relaxed the activity of very unexceptionable characters. On the other hand, continued he, people are often very unjust towards persons of this description, by attributing sudden ruin and large losses to them, in which they have had no part. What is the use of sending for an able physician, without following his directions, and even when affairs are put into the hands of the most equitable and clear-headed man of business, what profit can be derived from it,

if the party has not attended to a single word of his advice.—I see, however, said I, that the situation of legal agent is always very lucrative.—My friend, replied Durand, we begin to attach so much importance to money, that if the system continues, people will soon think very lightly of things which shock them in the present day; for example, usury, now reputed dishonorable, will cease to be so in a few years—and all that enables a man to make money, without having recourse to positive robbery, will be permitted as perfectly just and proper. But let us return from this digression to what regards yourself.

I am now arranging the affairs of the Marquis de Palmis; he is about to go into Switzerland with his Nephew, and has commissioned me to procure a young literary character, or at least some one who was rather clever and knew something of design, to accompany him on his journey, which will last three months. I shall propose you, by which you will

see a singularly curious country, and on your return to Paris, there is no doubt of the Count d'Inglar's being here.—This is all very well, but what do I know about literature?—That's no matter, you possess wherewithal to acquire it; there are so many, besides, who pretend to be literary men, without having the smallest right to do so!..You write well, possess natural talents and they have been cultivated; what more is necessary?—But how can I be useful to them?—Why in making sketches, writing notes, and in *editing*, that is, to keep a journal for the Marquis, which he will, on his return, give out as being all his own, and most probably publish, with his name in the title page, particularly if the *furor* of being thought a great writer, which he once had, returns.—And pray, what character has this nobleman?—None: he always adopts the sentiments, opinions, and taste of those with whom he is in the habit of living. He has been alternately known as a prodigal, miser, debauchee, an extremely

temperate man, and a libertine. The fact is, his natural indolence, lightness and frivolity, are so much in extremes, that he never can follow up any thing, and for want of proper reflection, he yields to every impulse, is carried away by the example of others, and has neither a fixed principle in his head, or a constant affection in his heart, yet, he is neither wicked or corrupt. His errors are never without some excuse, because they are not premeditated or methodical; nor are they ever long continued; but, on the other hand, neither his sentiments or good actions are guaranteed in the future. The solid base is wanting; so that a deplorable existence, which presents nothing certain but invincible weakness, and perpetual inconstancy is the result.—How old is he? —Thirty-five, and he has been married these two years to one of the most beautiful women in Paris. He has already been guilty of three or four acts of infidelity, but just at this moment you will find him in

a good vein, an alarming change in his health, added to the total derangement of his affairs, having worked a sudden and complete reform in him. In his present mood, there is no doubt of his having much more inclination for the Monastry of La Trappe than a place at Court. The faculty have advised him to travel for some months, and he has preferred Switzerland, as being the most wild and interesting country of Europe, and the simplicity of manners amongst the people is equally attractive. His wife wished to accompany him, but motives of economy induce him to leave her with his mother-in-law. He only takes his Nephew, a lad of sixteen, and preceptor with him.—This is the son of his brother then?—Yes, of the Duke de Palmis, a brother by the father's side; but the Duke is twenty years older than the Marquis. After having remained a widower some time, he was married about a year ago, to a young girl of seventeen.

They are both fortunate in wives, for the Duchess is also an angel in appearance and character. Her husband is, on the contrary crabbed, jealous, and morose, but she never complains, appears happy, and only opposes sweetness of temper and patience, to his violence. A month after his marriage, the Duke took her to the waters of Plombières, which he had been ordered to drink. I was there at the time with my wife, to whom the Duchess took a great liking, and notwithstanding the distance which birth and rank places between them, this intimacy not only subsists, but will, I am sure, continue, for it is founded on perfect sympathy; my Sophie is not so young as the Duchess, but she tells me that the latter possesses a highly cultivated mind, and a degree of shrewdness altogether above her age. Very well said I, arrange this affair in the best way you can. I shall be delighted to undertake the journey, and if productive of no other benefit it will probably make me forget my troubles for a little time.

Durand assured me that he was certain of success in his application; upon which I became somewhat less uneasy, and immediately returned home; on arriving at my uncle's, he was just going to dinner, I took my usual place, in silence; he seemed low spirited, and embarrassed but was very mild to me, whereas I observed a degree of coldness on his part with Matilda, which he had never shown before. It occurred to me that he might have betrayed some suspicions as to the probable exaggerations of her reports, with regard to my conduct, and that they had a dispute mixed up with some reproaches, if not a downright quarrel on my account; as to Matilda, she could not hide a degree of ill humour which appeared in spite of all her efforts to conceal it. After dinner, I retired to my room, for the purpose of remaining there to finish something for the shop, in which I succeeded before going to bed, though it did not prevent me from getting up as usual at seven.—I afterwards sent the article to my

uncle, to show him that I had sat up to finish it. At eight, Durand came in to say he had settled every thing, and that he would return about twelve to conduct me to the Marquis, with whom I was to depart in three days for Switzerland. Having communicated the above, my friend went away again directly; when alone, I sat down and wrote to my uncle, in terms of great respect, simply informing him of the arrangement just made, what my project was, and asking whether he approved of it, the orders he had to give me, &c. As he had not gone out, the letter was immediately handed to him, and in about half an hour after he sent for me. I found him alone in his closet, he was disturbed and sorrowful.... Having told me to be seated, he said that he approved of my intended journey, and as he had already told me, of my plan with regard to joining the Viscount d'Inglar on my return, observing that this young nobleman was no less praise-worthy for his mental acquire-

ments than his prudent conduct. But Julien, continued he, if I have any authority over you, and you have any gratitude for all that I have done, I am sure you will not quit me without proving it.—Speak said I, uncle, you have only to command me, and if in my power I will obey.——It is fully so.—You must, in the first place, accept the pension, as a proof of my paternal affection towards you; twenty thousand francs have been placed in the hands of M. Rouan, the Notary, and the interest of it is yours.——When you design to address me with so much goodness, said I, you may be certain that I shall receive your proffered generous allowance with the most lively gratitude.——You must also leave this house without entertaining feelings of rancor towards any one. He now pronounced a long eulogium on his wife, protested that she was very fond of me, and that it was Mademoiselle de Versec, and the servants, who had spread the reports and poisoned his mind against me; that, generally, his

wife used to defend me; he added, that he was convinced there must have been a great deal of misunderstanding on both sides throughout; that he had no doubt of my attachment; that he knew I possessed excellent qualities, and that notwithstanding the severity he had shown me the day before, and which perhaps at the first moment of passion, was carried too far; he loved me as his own son. At these words, I burst into tears; when he embraced me with great emotion, and I was not the less affected; you will always be my favorite, said he, but acknowledge that you are in fault with Matilda, and that you have not been so civil as you ought of late; nor have you justified the friendship she entertains for you, the proofs of which I have so often seen with my own eyes.—My dear Uncle, said I, now that you do justice to my sentiments towards yourself, I am ready to do whatever you desire.—— Come then and make it up with my wife.——On saying this he took my

hand and led me out of the room. To reach that of Matilda, it was necessary to traverse a long corridor that was extremely dark; having got within a few paces of the door, my uncle stopped and said, in a low whisper,—*you must begin by making a little excuse; she is a woman and my wife, so that this sacrifice ought not to cost you much uneasiness; do it therefore, Julien, for my sake.* How infinitely more persuasive kindness and goodnature is, to a feeling heart, than the greatest eloquence and most seductive artifices!——I promised to do every thing he required. We found Matilda alone, I advanced towards her, with real feelings of sincerity, for I only thought of my uncle, and said, my dear aunt pray forget all my faults, and let me be restored to your friendship. My dear Julien, she very mildly replied, I never ceased to like you, and if I have done any thing to displease you, be assured that my heart had no share in it; on pronouncing these words she held her hand

out and I pressed it to my lips; my good uncle, shedding tears, cried Matilda embrace him....which she did with the utmost apparent sensibility. He then pressed us both to his bosom, when all three were in tears, and for once, I really believed those of his wife and her emotion were sincere. There was no farther explanations made on either side. Matilda, to whom my letter had been already shown, knowing that she would get rid of a troublesome witness, and that I was to depart in two or three days, no longer entertained the least animosity against me; besides, she could not help giving me the credit of not attempting even indirectly to defend myself by becoming her accuser. Thus then a perfect good understanding was re-established between all the parties.

Durand returned at noon with a hackney coach, in which we proceeded to the Marquis de Palmis; he received us in his bed room, and was attended by his physician (who came to take leave

of him) the Marchioness and Duchess of Palmis his sister-in-law. I was quite dazzled by the beauty and address of these two ladies; the features of the Marchioness were striking and graceful: those of the Duchess possessed a sweetness of expression, and ingenuity that reminded me of Edelie's charming physiognomy; and on this account she pleased me the most. The Marquis, who was in his dressing gown, received me with great civility. I am only afraid of one thing, said he, that of my wearing you out; for my bad health makes me extremely dull and serious, and then I am so old!..As you were so young and gay, only eight months ago, interrupted the Marchioness, I trust that after a month's travelling, M. Delmour will see you in your natural state; the pure air of the mountains is sure to restore you. The only answer made to this, by the Marquis, was a deep sigh; when the Marchioness turning to the Duchess; Octavia, said she, how happy

Tiburtius will be to have such a young travelling companion! The Duchess, looking at me, smiled with a degree of complacency expressive of all that was amiable: she earnestly recommended Tiburtius to my care, as her step-son, and spoke in a strain of the warmest affection for him. Make yourself perfectly easy, sister, replied the Marquis, I am sure they will agree extremely well together: whilst occupied in climbing precipices, and wandering over the mountains, I shall rest at a neighbouring cottage; they can always find amusement, while I study the manners of the good Swiss, and moralize with the Abbé ———. I listened very attentively to the doleful reflections of the Marquis, which appeared very singular and misplaced, in the mouth of one who had scarcely attained his thirty-fifth year; for I did not as yet know that a reformed rake and disappointed man, frequently resemble a sage, in their conversation at least. The Marchioness now ques-

tioned me about my cameo drawings. Durand, who brought the profile of Sophie, which I had just completed for him, hastened to produce it; she praised it excessively, and with that animation, so peculiar to her, whenever any object really met her approbation; while the Duchess assured us that nothing could be more perfect than the likeness. She added a number of very flattering expressions, on the mind, and amiable qualities of the original; every word she uttered seemed to come from the heart, and was, besides, without the least air of exaggeration; preserving calmness and deference in all things, it was even easy to perceive a degree of reserve in her most indifferent words and actions, which, though they did not exclude the keenest sensibility, never allowed her to fall into enthusiasm. There was modesty, even in her friendship, and this extended to her most virtuous admiration. The Marchioness possessed a heart equally tender, but her manners were much

more animated, while she had less steadiness of character; sure of only liking what was estimable, she gave herself entirely up to her affections, without imagining it was possible to be deceived, or forseeing the danger of all passionate sentiment!— With her youth, beauty, incontestible superiority of talent, and a husband by no means worthy of her, she had passed two years in the midst of fashionable life, without her reputation having suffered the smallest blemish: she was affectionately attached to her mother and sister-in-law, relying with all the security of inexperience, and a great elevation of character, on the purity of her principles, and not supposing that there were any shoals to avoid in life, or dangers to fear, she entered freely and without precaution into its perilous career.

After having exhausted all that was complimentary, and obliging, on the merits of my little drawing, she conducted Durand and myself into an ad-

joining cabinet, to show us some miniatures of her own execution: they were so extremely beautiful, that I at first very unjustly suspected them to have been done by another hand; the tricks resorted to by Matilda, having made me very incredulous as to female talent of this discription.

The Marchioness spoke to us of her sister-in-law, in terms of the highest panegyric; she drew a portrait of her, that represented the most perfect of created beings, and I have since found it was by no means exaggerated. She also described the character, mind, and qualities of young Tiburtius in very lively terms of applause; returning to the Marquis, I was asked some questions by the Duchess relative to Edelie, with whom she had been at the Convent, where they were very intimate. It will be readily imagined, that all she said on this subject only served to render her still more interesting in my estimation.

I left the house enchanted with these two personages, but at the same

time, suspended my judgment on their virtue and sincerity, for the Baroness de Blimont and Matilda had given me but a very indifferent opinion of the sex in general.

I now wrote to the Viscount d'Inglar, giving him a minute account of my situation and of the journey I was about to undertake. I gave some handsome presents to little Casilda, and also went to take leave of my mother, whom I found alone, she spoke in the most bitter and despairing terms of her husband's conduct, and for the first time, informed me, that he got possession of all the money received in the shop, leaving her in want of every thing: having saved nearly eight hundred francs from my own earnings, I sent her six hundred of them, an act of duty which seemed to afford her great pleasure.

On the evening before my departure, I received the benediction of my uncle, with no less gratitude than respect, and left the house next morning at six o'clock, before he had arisen.

CHAP. XII.

Portrait of Tiburtius. — Journey into Switzerland. — News which Julien receives from Paris. — His return to France.

I DID not, however, leave my uncle's house without feelings of extreme anguish; for, notwithstanding the tenderness he manifested at our parting, I could not help considering myself as banished from under his roof. Reaching the Marquis de Palmis' a little after six, I found the post-horses all ready harnessed in the court-yard; but as he was not yet dressed, I went into the drawing-room, where Durand had been for some time, conversing with the Abbé Aillet and his pupil, young Tiburtius; who was generally styled the Baron de Palmis. The latter immediately came up and paid me a number of flattering compliments, with inexpressible grace and delicacy, while

the Abbé looked very hard towards the spot I was seated in, without speaking a single word. The appearance of Tiburtius was truly prepossessing, and his manners full of affability, nor have I ever met any one who so happily combined frankness with gaiety; he was naturally endowed with what they used then to call *the happy knack*, and, in after years, the witticisms and lively sallies of no one were more generally cited than those of Tiburtius. This sort of talent does not, as many people think, exclude solidity, though perhaps injurious to it, by producing the most agreeable successes in society, those of the present moment, and in persuading us that reflection is superfluous, it accustoms one never to make use of this faculty. Tiburtius had also been brought up with great care, and had an excellent heart; yet you could already perceive that the impetuosity so peculiar to youth, added to a little natural violence of character, would have much greater influence over his future

actions than either his principles or reason.

In about three quarters of an hour the Marquis sent for Durand to confer with him on business; and they remained closeted together for some time; during which I frequently took out my watch, and looked at it with considerable impatience, on recollecting that the Marquis had particularly recommended me to be there *precisely at six*. I had not been as yet accustomed to the system of some great men, who fancy themselves ministers of state when they keep their inferiors waiting for several hours together, and often (as I have since seen) while they walked about their studies without thought or occupation. Tiburtius was charmed at this delay, because he hoped the Marchioness might awake in the interval, and that he would thereby have an opportunity of seeing his aunt again, for a few moments, before our final departure; but the Marquis joined us by eight o'clock, when going into the court,

we entered the travelling carriage, in which the Marquis and Abbé took the back seat, while Tiburtius and myself occupied the box. Thus arranged, the vehicle drove off.

The Abbé Aillet, then about forty years of age, was by no means so able a tutor as M. Desforges; but he was neither destitute of abilities or merit. He was naturally of a saturnine diposition, which he contrived to pass for deep thinking; morose and cynical, the Abbé never appeared gay or smiling, except when censuring manners, laws, and governments, for he would upon no account abuse or criticise individuals. He never praised except with an air of extreme coldness, bordering on that sort of fear we betray, from an idea of being about to commit a crime. He was neither loved or feared by his pupil; who, from never obtaining his approbation, became alike indifferent to his praise and dissatisfaction. The journey amused me exceedingly; whether in the carriage or on the lake, the

Abbé descanted in his usual strain, on the manners and customs of the Swiss: he found fault with the finest situations, and complained alike of heat and cold. The Marquis *studying the manners of the good Helvetians*, and in sleeping in the boats or at inns, seemed equally satisfied. Tiburtius said and did a thousand laughable things: we climbed trees and ascended mountains together. I sketched and kept notes of all that occurred, by which the time passed with great rapidity.

Tiburtius soon conceived the warmest friendship for me, and I had the good fortune not to displease the Abbé, whom I sometimes questioned relative to the Marchioness de Palmis; when the only answer I could extract, was that of her being a personage of whom it was *impossible to say any harm.* This was his greatest eulogy when speaking of a female. But Tiburtius never mentioned his mother-in-law without enthusiasm; he shewed us the letters he received from her, nor

could I sufficiently admire the good sense and feeling which marked every line of them. After being married fifteen months the Duchess presented her husband with a son. She not only nursed the child herself, but made him the constant theme in her letters to Tiburtius; frequently expressing a hope that the latter would be a guide and mentor to her boy, when he grew up and entered the world. She dwelt at great length on this topic; nor was it less agreeable to her step-son, upon whose mind it made a very lively impression. Yes, he would say, I am fifteen years older than my half-brother, I shall therefore be quite a man by the time he reaches my age; and can then be much more useful to him than an Abbé. It is then, too, that I shall have an opportunity of proving how grateful I feel to my affectionate mother-in-law, for all her kindness. As he promised, so did Tiburtius act, in the end; for he became one of the most useful and amiable mentors his young brother could have

had. The Duchess found in this and many other instances, a just recompence for her good sense and angelic virtues: it is certain, on the other hand, that if she had been a bad step-mother, her own son would have been a source of infinite wretchedness to his parents; but the care and vigilance of Tiburtius snatched him from many dangers, that a woman could neither foresee or be acquainted with.

In the meantime, and towards the middle of our journey, the Marquis suddenly began to emerge from his apathy; and it was evident that his health returned daily. We remained some time at Geneva, where he was greatly amused, fell in love, and immediately assumed the manners and conduct of a young rake. I was shocked to see the husband of one of the most beautiful women in Paris, forget himself for a coquette, without either charms of mind or person; but the conquest of a *fair Helvetian* appeared to be the most flattering triumph he could achieve. While he was giving himself

entirely up to this lady, I received a letter from Durand, informing me that Eusebius had returned to Paris; that the marriage of his sister was at length about to take place, and moreover, that Eusebius himself was to be married in a fortnight after. I shuddered at the fate of Edelie, and waited impatiently for news from her brother; although I did not hear from him till our return to France, when I found a letter of his, at the post office of Lyons. In this he communicated the event of his marriage to a daughter of the Mareschal ***: his letter was both concise and sorrowful. It gave me great uneasiness, and led me to imagine that, like Edelie, he had been sacrificed to the views of ambition which were so well known to influence the Marchioness; nor was my chagrin diminished on reflecting that two persons, who were so dear to me, did not seem likely to increase their happiness by matrimony.

CHAP. XIII.

Julien's return to Paris.—His grief on arriving there.— His interview with Eusebius.

THE Viscount d'Inglar had informed me he would have a house to himself, in another year; until which time he intended to live in that of his parents; and that I should, on coming to Paris, immediately be put in possession of Edelie's apartments, which would then be vacant by her marriage.

Having travelled all night to save time, we arrived at the barriers of Paris about eight o'clock in the morning. My first care was to visit Eusebius. What was my grief and surprise to find him confined to his bed, and seriously ill of an inflammatory fever! He was, however, perfectly collected, and received me with the utmost joy. His wife and her mother came regularly three times a day to sit

with him in his room; the Marquis was in Dauphiny, while his sister had gone into Normandy. The good Abbé Desforges and myself never quitted his room for the whole six days he was considered in danger. On the fourth, feeling himself infinitely worse than the preceding days, he demanded, and received, the sacrament with equal calmness and piety. Two hours after, when left with only the Abbé and myself, he looked wistfully at us, observing, How very much you both seem altered.....Ah! my friends, continued he, and would it be really a misfortune peaceably to end one's days in the midst of friends, at an age of maturity when nothing had, as yet, sullied the innocence of life?....If it pleases Heaven to dispose of me, I will not fear the uncertain and awful future?.....I have known the happiness of legitimate affections, and the charm of those pleasures which are unattended by troubles or remorse; I have known all the delight of that tender pity which can succour the

unfortunate who implore it! Books alone have taught me that there exists ingrates and calumniators!.. What more could a long train of years hold out to me?—Painful struggles and perhaps, fatal reverses!.... The experience acquired during the days of adolescence is always pleasing; while that of maturer years and old age is not only severe, but often overwhelming..... Here he ceased, on perceiving that his discourse, so far from consoling, only served to increase the poignancy of our feelings.

On that very night Edelie, to whom an express had been sent, arrived. I was so absorbed in sorrow, that her appearance, though it affected me very much, only tended to increase my emotions with regard to her brother's situation. Her grief was such as might be expected, and although very difficult to please on such a subject, it did not disappoint me. Happily, on the seventh day, my friend was declared out of danger; this moment of ecstasy cannot be described. The Abbé and

myself did not, however, indulge in all the excess of our joy, till left alone with the patient. On the doctor's announcing the gratifying intelligence, I ventured, for the first time, to kiss the hand of Edelie; upon which, yielding to the transport caused by the above event, she pressed mine, and immediately after, that of the Abbé. Tears were abundantly shed by all present; when Edelie, taking me to her brother's bed side, said, My dear Eusebius, you cannot fail to be ever the friend of Julien; for he justly merits your utmost affection. This obliging expression was no less affecting to the Viscount than grateful to myself. The Abbé came, at length, and forced us to leave him; making us sit down in another part of the room. When once satisfied, as to the recovery of Eusebius, I could no longer help feeling a sensation of horror on hearing Edelie addressed by the title of her husband: the appelation of *Countess de Velmas* occasioned a violent palpitation of the heart, and I had

great difficulty in concealing this involuntary emotion from those around me.

Purity of blood and a good constitution, saved the Viscount from all the weariness of a long convalescence; he left his bed on the eighth day, and in five or six more, re-assumed his fine ruddy complexion, which was soon followed by a perfect restoration to his wonted health. We had shortly after this happy circumstance, a long conference *tête-à-tête;* but before I proceed any farther, it is proper that I should mention a few traits in the character of one, who is destined to play a very mysterious, as well as interesting part in the course of the present history. The worthy tutor of this personage never attempted to fill his pupil's head with a vast or brilliant erudition; they had read all the truly excellent works in our language together, and those he considered as such, were confined to books in which beauty of style, united to correct thinking and pureness of morality, was carried to the

highest perfection. He meditated profoundly with his scholar on all the master pieces, whether of literature or art then in vogue. During the five last years of his education, he made him feel the sublimity of that system which is always useful, necessary, and invariable, because founded on an immortal basis: I mean religion. Finally, he inspired him with the greatest contempt for every work that happened to be in opposition to these eternal principles; also for those doctrines and opinions which cannot be supported without accumulating falsehood, calumnies, and contradictions.* When he had thus formed the mind and judgment of his pupil, he gave him a manuscript of his own writ-

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* The chief of the sect surpassed all the writers of his party in this respect, and no author ever made so many false quotations. *When M. de Voltaire reads a work,* observes the president de Montesquieu, *he recasts it, and then criticises that which has been just written by himself.—See Familiar Letters.*

ing, which they also read together. It was composed of extracts taken from the *philosophical* works of some modern writers, and entitled, "*The falsehoods and contradictions of the Detractors of Religion.*" The Abbé took care to inform his scholar that these extracts did not contain a tenth part of the "falsehoods and contradictions" of the said authors; but there were quite enough to convince a well-disposed mind, that such impostors could only seduce the most thoughtless and ignorant parts of the community. He added, that his pupil would see such palpable and impudent mistatements in this selection, that it would be necessary for the latter to compare them with the original works, as there was not the least doubt of their being denied with the same effrontery which had given rise to their publication, and such was actually the case, a circumstance that filled Eusebius, with all that indignation; which bad faith the most odious could create in a character, whose can-

dour and sincerity nothing had ever vitiated, when, therefore, he entered the world, the passions were devoid of logical arrangement to him, and their apostle without authority; though possessing a soul the most amiable and a mind susceptible of great exaltation, he passed through a stormy career if not with calmness and sincerity, at least with the noble determination to follow the honest path he had traced for himself. On entering into society, he was forcibly struck by the false reasonings, absurd prejudices, and unnatural exaggeration of certain sentiments; by the slender foundation of most people's pretentions, and above all; by the revolting opposition he remarked between professions and conduct, manners and laws. His extreme sensibility preserved him from misanthropy, but he never loved what is called the world, yet, from the very moment of his entry into its vortex, such was the grace and prepossessing nature of his appearance, the expres-

sion of his phisiognomy and modest reserve of his deportment, that all eyes were upon him. „ Worldly experience teaches, that in youth, few possess an air of perfection in manners or address, if destitute of natural talents. Although the Viscount d'Inglar was not by any means communicative, and generally silent, every one agreed that he was endowed with a most polished mind, and from this predilection in his favour, he enjoyed that sort of respectful consideration which seems only calculated for maturity, but which young men will always obtain, when exempted from pedantry; they are at the same time prudent and thoughtful. I never observed more than one fault in the Viscount, this was an inequality of humour, which did not however extend to rudeness, but gave an irritable turn to that intercourse which was in general so mild and agreeable. One day when I reproached him with this failing, he laid his hand on his heart, and said, there is something here

that ferments, and tells me I shall not be happy. This reply at once affected and surprised me, and I have since often thought that every heart formed to love passionately, possesses similar melancholy presentiments!..... In my conversations with the Viscount after his sickness, I asked whether his marriage had made him happy? It fixes me, said he, and that is of itself a source of satisfaction to one of my character; they have given me a virtuous, amiable, and well bred companion, and this is all a reasonable man can expect, when his heart is free. Here he changed the subject, and spoke of my own particular interests, touching on my future prospects, the studies we should pursue in the mornings, &c. adding, we know each other from our earliest infancy, and I have always had an idea of attaching you to my fate. We shall make the perilous voyage of life together; you may rely on the stability of my friendship; I only require one condition on your

part, it is, that you have an object in view, consequently, a regular plan of conduct, and that this plan shall be followed with perseverance. Mine is to make myself distinguished from the herd of youthful idlers who crowd our streets, by wisdom, prudence and virtue ; finally, to practice that which I admire, and to assume the system I have proposed to myself without delay or hesitation. This system, all who are properly brought up, should lose no time in adopting. By what fatality can young men neglect to gain public esteem, at an age when its attainment is so glorious, and when it is always blended with admiration? During the only period of life in which virtue can be decorated by all the charms that seduce!..... There have been at all times (though to say the truth in very limited numbers) men irreproachable from their earliest years. Why have not others the ambition to be placed in the above class? People ought to follow this meritorious route, though certain of

only treading on thorns and encountering persecution; but let us believe on the contrary, that it is the surest one, and leads to every thing, provided talents proportioned to the object in view, be not wanting; and where is the man who does not possess some abilities, when he governs his passions, and is not led away by the contagion of example? Let us then mutually support each other, my dear Julien, in this salutary project, which, even supposing the failure of all that does not exactly depend on our own wishes, must ever procure us the most desirable blessings this world can afford: peace of mind, the esteem of all good men, and health, that can neither be worn out by intrigue, exhausted by the violence of our passions, nor the oppressive lassitude of satiety.

How truly eloquent was not the foregoing discourse, coming as it did, from a young man who had scarcely reached his twenty-second year, and who, though living in the vortex of society for above

four years, contrived to escape the smallest reproach! I listened to him with the greatest enthusiasm, and there was no sacrifice on earth I was not prepared joyfully to make, if only to merit his esteem. I swear scrupulously to follow your example, said I; you will be my tutelar angel: I cannot offer you any assistance, for you will find all that is required in your own heart and character; but succour me, and I will imitate you, I also promise, henceforth, entire docility to all your commands....No, no, replied the Viscount, virtue and friendship will establish a perfect equality between us.....Hear me, Julien, he then said, with a degree of vehemence I had never before witnessed in him.... This is not one of those vulgar associations between a patron and his dependant, or a great man and his inferior; it is the intimate union of two minds, that wish to be identified for the purpose of becoming strengthened in virtue; this is a sacred tie! .... I know you

well, and notwithstanding my age, I shall always consider you as my ward, in this point of view you are doubly dear to me, and I think I have a greater claim to your gratitude than I could ever acquire by increasing your fortune. In the course of our future intercourse, let us forget that distance of worldly convention, which only separates people in appearance; be virtuous, and I will ever regard you as my equal; surpass me in virtue, talents, and information, it is me who will then be called upon to respect you; so far from looking to you for the complaisance of a subaltern, or any deference to my weaknesses, I ask you to remind me without ceremony of my faults; though indulgent to every one else, you must be severe on me, and this will be severity to yourself, for it will be returned; I shall not observe the smallest imperfection in your conduct or character without telling you so, with the most open sincerity; we are generally deceived as to ourselves, so that to

become as perfect as the frailty of our nature will allow, we ought to make this a reciprocal engagement. At these words, yielding to an irresistible impulse, and taking his hand, I exclaimed in a voice of the utmost fervour, I swear to observe it, and call heaven that guides and inspires you to witness my oath !... O Julien ! cried Eusebius, be assured, that this oath, as holy as it is disinterested, is already ratified in heaven !....On pronouncing the foregoing words he embraced me, and neither of us could restrain our tears. A dead silence ensued, for no language could express what we felt at this moment. What, indeed, are all the deceitful joys of vanity and ambition, compared to such feelings !—

When our mutual emotion had subsided a little, Eusebius gave me his ideas on the *inequality amongst men :* it is real, said he, since we find it in their minds, attributes, and faculties, a fool will never be equal to a man of genius ; nor can an ignoramus be compared to a sage, and still

less so, a vicious individual to him, who has never forgotten his duty to society, Reason, ever in unison with religion, admits only that, as partaking the nature of true equality. Hence people generally conclude, that respect for illustrious birth is an absurd prejudice: this conclusion is by no means just. It is constantly repeated that we ought only to respect individuals according to their own merit; that they have no right to pride themselves on that of their ancestors, and that the name transmitted to them is a matter of indifference and of no consequence in itself. I would ask him who is most exempted from prejudice, but who possesses some elevation of mind, if it can be a matter of indifference to descend from an infamous wretch or a great man, and to bear the name of Ravaillac, Jefferies, and Robespierre, or Newton, Howard, and Fenelon? Does it follow that a nation is weak or imbecile, if, on having discovered the descendant of a great genius in poverty, it hastens

to relieve his wants and secure his independence?....Thus then a good name cannot be called a chimera; for it is impossible that, in a long series of ancestors, who have occupied high offices, many are not found whose merit deserves veneration; and it is natural to honour in their descendants, those services which they rendered to their country. We have, said I, in the lowest class something of a similar kind; for those who practise a respectable and lucrative trade, derive considerable vanity from being able to say, that they have exercised it for many years, from *father to son*: this is a title of honour for such people, and no one contests its validity.—Doubtless it is, replied Eusebius, and if all the plebeian race preserved family traditions, well authenticated, many would be found possessing a right to real titles of nobility, which could, originally, have only consisted of certain distinctions, accorded by gratitude to the descendants of men who have faithfully served and illustrated their

country by talents, useful discoveries, or meritorious actions. What numberless traits of heroism, amongst the people, are there not buried in the most profound oblivion! How many individuals of this class are totally ignorant that their forefathers had often exposed themselves to every danger, for the purpose of saving the lives of others; whether in the midst of conflagrations or by snatching them from a watery grave! How many brave soldiers has there not fallen, in the field of battle, after having performed prodigies of valour; and of whose names we are ignorant! How many instances of probity, what touching scenes of virtue, which never reach the knowledge even of grand children!..... The Anglades of Burgundy and Pinons of Auvergne, though mere labourers, count five hundred years of ancestry, from *father to son*, in the exercise of the most useful occupations. Their family traditions present an admirable monotony, which, during this long space, reduces all their history

to this concise sentence: *all devoted themselves to agriculture, and were alike laborious and honest.* This nobility of the golden age is quite as efficient as that of some modern gentlemen, who are as proud of their ease and indolence as of their ancestors." "But you will allow," said I, "that *all men are equal in the eye of the law?*" "No," rejoined Eusebius, "perfect equality is no more to be found there than any where else. Let us suppose, by way of illustration, two men guilty of a crime deserving death, and that one of them possesses neither talent or merit of any kind, while the other is full of both: the latter will be forgiven, if his judges have a due regard to the national glory, without this act of clemency being one of injustice. Milton, though a rebel and conspirator, escaped that death which so many others suffered for the same crimes, because he had already displayed a considerable share of those powers that have immortalized him with posterity. It was also after the

above judicious exemption he produced his *Paradise Lost** ; all men are not therefore *equal in the eyes of the law;* they are only so by an ideal standard, and before written codes which award specific judgement on particular crimes and misdemeanours. But the application of all law, to individuals differently circumstanced, is constantly destroying, and it ought to destroy this pretended equality. Upon the whole, let us conclude; my dear Julien, that it is not *all* prejudice, which leads people to attach some importance to birth ; but it must also be acknowledged, that he who bears an illustrious

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* A great Italian Painter, *Mattia Preti*, better known under the name of *Calabrese*, having killed two centinels, who wanted to prevent his entering Naples, lest he should bring the plague into the city, would have been infallibly condemned to death had not the vice-roy interfered, observing, *excellens in arte non debet mori.* This great artist's principal master-pieces were painted subsequent to the above event; he was created a knight of Malta for his talents, and died at that island in 1699 aged eighty.

name, unworthily, so far from meriting respect, is infinitely more contemptible, than the worst character in a low class of life, where there has been no such impulse to elevate his ideas or excite his emulation.

CHAP. XIV.

Establishment of Julien at the Viscount d'Inglar's house.—Portrait of the Viscountess, and of her brother, the Marquis de Solmire.

THE conversation, of which I have just given an account, marks an important epoch in the history of my life; it carried my admiration and attachment for Eusebius to the utmost, and gave rise to an unreserved reciprocity of communication, on our inmost secrets; thus he, with all the frankness of his noble character, raised me to his own level; nor did any *letters of nobility* ever afford more pride or satisfaction to the most vain and ambitious of the plebeian class than

this flattering distinction. I took possession of my apartments, which consisted of a small *entresol** that Edelie used to occupy whenever she came to pass a few days at home, from Panthemont. My two rooms were close to that of Mademoiselle de Versec, between whom and myself, there was a considerable degree of coolness, not only because I thought she had, to please her niece, made several false reports against me to my uncle, but from her having greatly annoyed me during the illness of Eusebius, by her pretentions to medical skill, and all the *receipts* daily brought to us, each of which was *sure* to effect his recovery, while every thing prescribed by the doctors was represented as absolute *poison*.

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* As there is no mode of rendering this word into our language, the Editor takes this opportunity of informing the untravelled reader, that the *entresol*, in most Parisian Houses, is a suite of low apartments, between the ground and first floor. It is generally occupied by upper servants or very intimate visitors.

This conduct, on her part, gave rise to many little squabbles between her and the abbé upon whose side, I was of course necessarily called upon to rally. As Eusebius however advised me to keep on terms with her, and we met every day at table, I made a point of paying her a visit; she received me very civilly, I afterwards accompanied her to my uncles two or three times, taking care always to pay for the hackney coach; a circumstance that tended greatly to consolidate our reconciliation. During these latter visits to my uncle, I found him extremely dejected, while his wife seemed in better spirits than ever, and was decked out in a costume that no tradesman's wife had hitherto adopted in any part of Paris, she wore a profusion of false hair, which was abundantly decorated with artificial flowers and feathers, nor was there a good proportion of *rouge* wanting to heighten the faded colour of her cheeks. This novelty, which my uncle had vainly opposed, did not fail to shock all the women

of her own class, who in six months after, and in spite of their husbands efforts to prevent it assumed the very same style of dress*. But her who had thus been the first to throw off the simplicity of her condition in life, also lost her reputation, nor could my uncle be ignorant of it, because all those whom they had been hitherto in the habit of receiving at the house, gave up their visits and would no longer associate with Matilda.

I now daily blessed that power, which had not only brought me nearer, but so intimately united my interests to those of a being who was every way worthy of my regard and confidence. How gratifying too, that I should have become an inhabitant of the very apartment which had been occupied by Edelie! I even suffered great uneasiness at the idea of being obliged to leave it in the course of another year. In searching every part of the

* This fact was realized a very few years before the revolution.

room, with the hope of finding some trace of its former inmate, I at length discovered a small artificial rose bud, and carefully locked it up; but my surprize and delight was farther increased to find, on looking into a table drawer, several little coloured sketches, drawn with her own hand, and amongst others an emblem of Hope, representing an anchor, on the tip of which a bird's nest was placed. Underneath this design, which was not more than half finished, were seen four letters composing the English word: *Hope*. I completed the drawing, by adding the sky, and introducing a small cloud over the anchor. I then copied the rose, which was also a symbol of Hope, this little task was done with so much care, and high finishing, that it was no longer possible to recognize the original sketch, and in order that the miniature might be worn, I determined to cover the letters of the motto with gold, and surround them by a few ornaments, thus completely disguising the

whole; when quite ready, it was put into a small mother-of-pearl case, and from that moment I invariably carried it about my person.

The following winter passed away very agreeably for me; I confess an unhappy passion had, in reality, been created, and could no longer be disguised from myself, but it was more tender than impetuous, and confounded as it were in my friendship towards Eusebius; for after all, I felt that he was more dear to me than ever his sister; this romantic sentiment which I had resolved for ever to conceal, only served to remove all ideas of entering into fashionable follies, from my imagination, it was in fact rather a preservative than a torment to me; on the other hand, I was so occupied, that, if thought of at all, it could only be so very vaguely. In addition to the advantages of being provided with board and lodging, Eusebius allowed me a pension of two thousand francs per annum, and which, joined to that of my

uncle, amounted to a yearly income a of thousand crowns. So that I enjoyed all the independence a person in my situation could reasonably expect, particularly as Eusebius was constantly making me some little presents, which were generally such, as tended to save a portion of my salary. I have already stated that we read some useful works in French, together with a proportion of English every morning: I was charged with the care of making extracts from all of them. In addition to the above, I continued to cultivate my talents for drawing, to which two hours of each day were regularly devoted, after this I took an Italian lesson. Thus I fulfilled in a great measure, the function of secretary and agent; but with order and activity, any thing may be achieved. Having passed two hours with Tibertius, and five in my own room, seven or eight of constant application was thereby created every day. I only went out for little more than an hour in the evenings to take the air, and once a fort-

night for the purpose of calling on my uncle, or visiting Durand, who occassionally came to see me at home, when he gave the best advice, as to the mode of conducting the affairs entrusted to my charge. I was sometimes allowed to accompany Eusebius to the theatre, or in paying a few visits to some of his friends, but he studiously avoided taking me to his sister's, or indeed to any of his young female acquaintances. It was also mutually arranged, that I should have no confidential communication with the Vicountess. I had, however, seen quite enough of this lady, to prevent me from feeling the least regret at the want of her society, and was inwardly mortified, to think that the wife of my protector, should possess a mind and character every way unworthy of such a husband. The Vicountess was one of those women with whom people could not well *advance in friendship*, that is to say, you might see her every day for many years, without finding in the end

that your intimacy had experienced the smallest increase: she was one of those, who neither want politeness or affability; that do not repel you by their coldness, but whose perpetual insipidity of character confirm you into a feeling of perfect indifference towards them; her face, though you could not call it handsome was rather pleasing, she was besides tall, well made, and had a very good complexion. The Viscount manifested no less tenderness than affection for her, and whenever he spoke of his wife, it was to eulogize her good sense, amiability and virtue.

The Vicountess had a brother, the Marquis de Solmire, who frequently came to see Eusebius. This gentleman appeared to be one of the most disagreable personages I had as yet encountered. There are some people in society, so cross-grained, that they are sure to view every thing through a false medium, who are bold without necessity, and fearful without cause; that depreciate what is

estimable, and are infatuated with that which they ought to condemn. These unhappy beings may be justly compared to dancers, who have no ear for music, and are consequently never known to keep time even by accident. Their heads are full of common place ideas, which they are unable to arrange, and therefore retail without method or reflection; they possess a species of wavering undefined vivacity, that inspires a degree of misapplied enthusiasm and ill timed indignation: such was the Marquis de Solmire's character, to which might be added, excessive ignorance, a large share of pride, and great self sufficiency; his friendship was in fact, at once importunate and inquisitive,—Eusebius, from motives of delicacy to the Viscountess, would only confide the weariness occasioned by the long visits of his brother-in-law to myself. One morning, as I left the room, after our studies were terminated, the Marquis entered; he began the conversation by speaking of me, probably because we

happened to meet on the staircase, and repeated several questions which had been already asked at least fifty times; Eusebius replied to them all, by mentioning my name with his usual indulgence; when the Marquis proceeded to give him a *friendly hint*, that the world thought it *extremely singular, he should have removed me so much out of my own sphere*, what sphere? asked Eusebius. Why it is well known, said the Marquis, that he is the son of a confectioner . . . . Well, rejoind the Viscount, does it therefore follow that he must be one himself? Your father, my dear Solmire, is a Mareschal of France, is this any reason that you are also to be one? People's sphere is created by their own tastes, or merit.—yes, but we do not see many sons of confectioners received in the world, or making brilliant fortunes.—That is true enough, because very few have ever been brought up like Mr. Delmour, and that there are not many born with such happy qualities; but yet, we might cite a thou-

sand examples of plebeians who have emerged with great celebrity out of the low condition in which their parents remained. Flechier, was the son of a tallow chandler; and during the last century, the Duke de la Rochefoucault, did something for a man of the lowest class in society, infinitely more *singular* than all I can possibly do for Delmour.—And pray who was that?—Gourville, who had, in early life, been his valet.—*His valet?* This instance is rather striking, it must be confessed.—Yet, Gourville became his agent and friend: he manifested such strict probity, and rare talents, that the great Condé, gave him many highly honorable proofs of friendship and esteem. Gourville's situation in society was also of the most agreeable description; he was intimately acquainted with the Princess Palatine, so celebrated for her mental qualifications; Louis the fourteenth frequently passed his evenings at her house; and, when he met Gourville there, the monarch made him sit at the

same table and even played cards with him.*—That was very strange indeed. —Do not we daily see plebeians, who have attained the situations of farmers-general, admitted into the best company, receive it at their own houses, and ally themselves by marriage to the first families?—But let us come to the point, is it not customary to introduce one's secretary into society?.....In the first place, I never take Delmour any where, except to visit those, who are pleased with him on his own account; in the next, he is not my secretary.—Then what do you call him?—My friend! Some like to keep an agent in their house, others prefer an artist or literary character; I have been fortunate enough to find a friend, he has become my companion, and I can only feel a sentiment of pity for those who think such a step either singular or extraordinary.

Here the conference ended, when the

* See Dangeau's Memoirs.

Marquis quitted Eusebius, by no means satisfied with the result of his *friendly expostulation*, and greatly shocked to find the Viscount had *so slender a notion of things, and such a limited knowledge of the world!*

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

PRINTED BY SCHULZE AND DEAN,
13, POLAND STREET,

00077779

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 21 October, 2015